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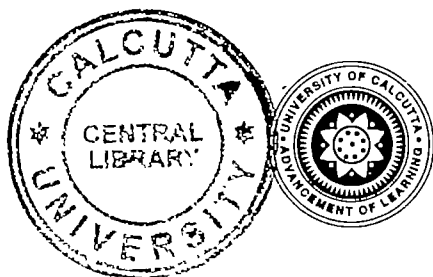
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## LOWER PALAEOLITHIC WEST BENGAL

Asok Datta

The archaeological researches over the last few decades have shown that Bengal had a discrete culture dating back to middle to late Pleistocene period. Since environment played a vital and crucial role in the life of early man, it is perhaps better to start with environmental episodes particularly the geologic and geomorphological features of the contemporary landscape in order to understand the process of interactions vis-a-vis cultural manifestation of early man. However the politico-administrative perception of West-Bengal also needs to be explained for a proper understanding of Palaeolithic Culture.

The name Bengal has been possibly derived from a term called *Vaṅgāla* in mediaeval time which included the territories now divided between West-Bengal and Bangladesh (Mukherjee, 1990). But the earliest reference to *Vaṅga* denoting a group of people has been made in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* while the *Arthasāstra* of Kautilya has referred to *Vaṅga* as representing a definite territorial unit. But none of these sources discloses the exact location of the land. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* of 1st Century A.D. has located the Ganges country on the sea, i.e. on the Bay of Bengal. He further described the country as having been bounded by the river *Gaṅgā*. There is no doubt that by the term Ganges country, he referred to *Gangaridai* of Greek and Latin texts (Mukherjee, 1990). Similarly Pliny of 1st century A.D. suggested that the final course of the Ganges was in the country of the *Gangaridai* people. Ptolemy of 2nd century A.D. suggested that the territories on the mouth of the Ganges were occupied by the *Gangaridai* people. Prof. Mukherjee (1990) quoting Chinese sources has suggested that *Gange* and *Vaṅga* were same and identical which extended upto the river *Suvamārekha* in the west and its eastern limit stretches upto the *Padmā/Meghna*. The territory includes the present day Midnapur, 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly and the districts of lower Bangladesh upto the *Padmā/Meghna*. This excludes the districts of Bankura, Purulia, Burdwan and Birbhum.

The territorial unity of ancient *Vaṅga* was intact upto 2nd century A.D. But from the Gupta and Post-Gupta periods, the connotation of the term *Vaṅga* lost much of its significance due to the rise of two separate territorial units on the western part of the *Bhāgīrathī*. The territorial units are *Rāḍha* and *Gauḍa*. During the

Pāla/Sena period, the territorial unit of Vaṅga was confined to Faridpur/Dhaka/Khulna area of Bangladesh and the south of this region was known as Vaṅgāla from which the present name of Bengal has been developed in late mediaeval or British period. It appears therefore that the geo-political concept of ancient Vaṅga was not a stable one and moreover it did not include all the territories of the present day West Bengal. So, in view of the present situation, it is very difficult to define the actual politico/administrative perception of ancient Bengal. For the present purpose we shall define the limits after Grierson's linguistic basis. Under the scheme, the area where Bengali is spoken as mother tongue should be considered as representing the geographical/political unit of ancient Bengal. He includes the area below the plateau of Hazaribagh and Lohardanga. Its western boundary runs through the district of Singhbhum and includes the whole district of Manbhum (Grierson, 1906).

#### **GEOLOGY AND GEOMORPHOLOGY :**

The present state of West Bengal, has a total land coverage of 87,616 square kilometre. It has little over 600 K.M. in North-South direction and 300 K.M. in East-West direction (Bose, 1979). The most significant aspect of the land form in the state is the presence of Bengal basin which occupies the entire Bangladesh and 63% of the total landmass of West Bengal. The Bengal basin extends from Purulia upland in the west to Tripura hills in the east and Garo/Rajmahal in the north to deep inside the Bay of Bengal in the south. So, the geological history of the greater part of West Bengal and the entire Bangladesh is the history of filling up of this basinal area. The process started from Neogene/Quaternary period. The huge amount of sediments brought by the Gaṅgā and the Brahmaputra filled up this area and consequently it becomes the largest delta of the world. The thickness of the alluvium sheet varies between 500 to 1000 feet. Thus West Bengal being a part of Bengal basin or delta is mostly comprised of alluvium sediments.

However, despite this flat alluvium landsurface, the landscape is also characterised by structural hills/mountains of the north; denudational ridges/hills comprising para-schist, para-gneiss, granite, granite-gneiss, Quartzite, sandstone etc. of the west; early to middle Pleistocene fan materials and lateritic upland and western plains developed over Archean to tertiary rocks (Ghosh, 1991).

The western part of West Bengal which merges with Chotonagpur plateau was the most favourable habitats of early man

in Bengal. This is evidently clear from the occurrence of stone age sites in this area. One of the main physiographical units of the plateau fringe area is the high rocky plains of the old delta which is further divided into two physiographic units, viz. old deltaic plain and the flood plain (Ghosh, 1978). This old deltaic plain is found to occur in the form of wide strip covering parts of Midnapur, Bankura, Purulia, Burdwan and Birbhum. This plain extends upto the Bhāgīrathī/Hooghli in the east, to the Gaṅgā/Padmā in the north and in the west, it stretches upto Chotonagpur and to Bay of Bengal in the south (Ghosh and Majumder, 1991). In this area, there are low isolated hills and these hills are more in the west than in the east. Susunia hill (439 M), Biharinath hill (447 M), Mejhia hill (61 M) etc. represent the relics of erosion and denudation of the former plateau. Chotonagpur plateau which is a typical geological feature of eastern India slides down in the north and east direction resulting in the formation of long range alluvium plains. Due to sliding down of the plateau in east direction, the rivers originating in this region flow in west to east direction. In the river Valleys of Suvarṇarekhā, Kasai and Damodar, the high banks formed by dissected valleys show Archean bed rocks consisting of schist, shale, granite etc. Due to inequality in the basic geological formations, the South-Western part of the state is provided with undulation (Ghosh, 1998). The basic geological structure has been subjected to weathering activities depending on the specific nature of the area. Consequently, the final shape of the land form shows perceptible changes. According to Dunn (1934) the Pleistocene gravel beds generally found in the major river banks are the slope wash of the earlier Miocene/Pliocene gravel sheet. The southern limit of this gravel sheet in this region is found at Baharagora, the tri-junction of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa (Mukherjee, 1983).

#### **STRATIGRAPHICAL SEQUENCE :**

The concept of time dimension is no less important than the concept of space dimension. Because unless the time perspective of an industry is determined, the study of such industry would be meaningless. The basic aim of chronology is to arrange the industrial groups in a systematic ordering. Chronological framework can be arranged with the help of stratigraphy, typology, technology and above all, absolute data. In the absence of absolute data in West Bengal, we can take the help of other elements to build up a chronological framework of different industrial units of the stone age culture in West Bengal.

The nature and volume of Pleistocene sedimentation depend on a number of factors, of which the most important ones are a) velocity of water discharge; b) climate; c) nature of slope towards river course. Unfortunately none of the river sections in West Bengal shows the sequential ordering of different Pleistocene and Post-pleistocene sedimentation. Hence, the reconstruction of stratigraphical sequence of the Pleistocene period is a composite one and is based on observations at a number of river sections (Ghosh, 1998).

In West Bengal, at places, the mottled clay bed is directly resting on the bed rock. The thickness of this clay bed varies between 2-3 M. (Datta, 1993). This bed is succeeded by a compact secondary pebbly lateritic bed. The bed is highly conglomerated with bigger and smaller gravels. This bed is succeeded by silty clay bed. At the top of this bed, there is another gravel bed. The gravels are loose and unconsolidated. The gravel bed is again succeeded by another clay bed which contains less sandy particles. Finally at the top, there is a huge deposit of recent clay or alluvium (Fig No. 1). But in some other places, the above stratigraphical sequence is found to be absent and instead a different pattern of Pleistocene sedimentation is found. This kind of situation can be observed particularly in the tributary river sections or smaller streams which are away from the master streams. In this area, a huge deposit of detrital or secondary laterite often mixed with gravels and in some other area, the pebbly lateritic gravel bed is underlain by a regular gravel bed. The detrital or secondary laterite bed is succeeded by a silt bed which is either red or yellow in colour. At the top of this, there is a huge deposit of alluvium clay. The secondary lateritic bed of this region is implementiferous. The co-relation between the gravel bed and the secondary lateritic bed is an urgent need.

The above mentioned stratigraphical sequences relate to the amount of precipitation which causes wet and dry phases and also temperature and humidity. It is assumed that during the time of deposition of bigger sediments, the volume and velocity of water in rivers were of larger dimension, while this volume and velocity must have sharply decreased at the time of deposition of finer sediments. It may be pointed out that the areas around smaller streams must have been the most favourable ground for continuous habitation, while in the river valleys around the master streams, the habitations were frequently disrupted due to floods. Naturally, the early hominids concentrated more on smaller streams than on the master streams. This is evidently clear from the distribution of sites.

Moreover, the possibility of survival of artifacts in primary context is more in smaller streams than on master streams.

#### **CULTURAL BEHAVIOUR :**

Culture refers to the rules of behaviour that guide the actions of members of society. Culture is an integral part of human society (Hammand, 1964) which distinguishes man from other animals. Genetics determines the biological properties of a species, but most of the behavioural traits are the result of post-natal cultural transmission. Cultural variability within a specific region may be due to many factors, but most important among them is environment. However, there are other points relevant to culture. The major important factor responsible for culture may be explained in terms of adaptation (Ghosh, 1995). Because since its emergence, man had to face a number of changing situations. To cope with these changing climatic conditions, he adapted himself through adjustment. These two factors, viz. changing environment and adaptation finally led to the emergence of culture.

Lower palaeolithic culture in West Bengal is basically an extension of Acheulian. In fact, this region is the easternmost limit of Acheulian movement. The basic components of the industry comprise Handaxe, Chopper, Cleaver and other minor types. Of these, Handaxe forms the dominant character which is always more than 50 percent in all the major regions. The distribution of lower palaeolithic sites in West Bengal is confined to the compact area of the south-western parts of the state. This region is broadly covered by the entire district of Purulia, western parts of Midnapur, Bankura, Burdwan and Birbhum.

The land elevation of this compact region varies between 90 m and 260 m from MSL. The rainfall is moderate ranging between 140 cm. and 200 cm. per year. The major drainage systems are Kasai, Damodar and Suvarṇarekhā. Quartz and Quartzite which were extensively used for fabrication of lower palaeolithic tools occur locally either in the form of river pebble or as outcrop. In this region, the distribution of lower palaeolithic sites are found concentrated in three important river valleys, viz. Suvarṇarekhā, Tarafeni and Gandheswari. Handaxes made on Quartz/Quartzite form the dominant character of the industry, but no vertical sequence of Handaxes is found at any site in West Bengal. Ovate is a common type of Handaxe in the industry, while Lanceolate type also occurs in lesser number. In many localities both chopper/chopping and Handaxes occur from the same geological horizon, i.e. gravel

conglomerate or secondary laterite. Thus it becomes practically impossible to work out a broad chronological ordering of the different constituent elements of lower palaeolithic industry. Technological studies show that in the fabrication of lower palaeolithic artifacts, namely, Choppers, Handaxes, Cleavers and Scrapers etc., the early hominids employed basically two types of techniques, viz. (direct percussion method) stone hammer technique and cylinder hammer technique.

Initial preparation of the stone was made by stone hammer technique and final preparation was made by cylinder hammer technique. The best evidence of stone hammer technique is found on chopper, while the application of cylinder hammer technique is found by the presence of small, uniform and shallow flake-scars with bilateral symmetry on handaxes. The Acheulian artifacts also contain secondary retouching all along the margins. In some regions choppers are made by the application of cylinder hammer or soft hammer technique without having any traces of primary flaking by stone hammer. Both stratigraphical evidences as well technical studies show that chopper/chopping components of the lower palaeolithic industry in West Bengal do not represent any separate tradition. It belongs to the Acheulian cultural components and should be studied in the context of its relevance in the contemporary environment.

Regarding the origin of Acheulian in West Bengal, it may be pointed out that it is a distinct migrant culture. Because no earlier stages of its development have been documented from anywhere in the state. In fact, the early hominids in their eastward movement entered into West Bengal from two directions (Datta, 1995). One such group of people moved from Mayurbhanj in Orissa and entered into West Bengal through Baharagara/Nayagram region and as there was no further scope for eastward movement due to presence of alluvium corridor, they moved towards north. Their presence is felt by the discovery of similar and identical tool types with substantial number of pebble-choppers. Similarly, another group of early hominids moved from Singhbhum region of Bihar and entered into West Bengal from the tri-junction of Purulia/Bankura and Midnapur border area and moved towards north east. This kind of movement on the part of early hominids is evidently clear if one makes an objective review of the artifactual data found from both the regions (Fig. No. 2).

In West Bengal, the lower palaeolithic or the Acheulian typology is dominated by Handaxe which is always more than 50%

in all the three important regions or river valleys. In Gandheswari river valley, the percentage of Handaxe is 78% while it is 62% in Tarafeni river valley. But in case of Suvarṇarekhā river valley in Baharagara/Nayagram region, the percentage is 57%. Similarly, the chopper/chopping components of the Acheulian industry in Suvarṇarekhā valley have a higher percentage being 25% which is higher than other two river valleys. In Tarafeni river valley its percentage is only 6% while it is almost nil at Gandheswari river valley. It appears, therefore, clear from the nature of distribution pattern of artifact types that within the broad environmental zone, there were minor variation in the overall environment. As regards the date of Acheulian in West Bengal, it is very difficult even to speculate a reasonable hypothesis since almost all the materials are surface collection. Even the so-called in situ materials coming either from gravel bed or detrital laterite do not convey any definite information. The horizontal expansion of the Acheulian in West Bengal is clear from the distribution of sites, but the vertical dimension in terms of absolute dating is impossible to draw on the basis of nature of deposition of artifacts in the Pleistocene sediments. Because the volume and thickness of deposits depend on a number of factors including velocity of water discharge, climate and nature of slope of Bed rock towards the river course. However, we can take the help of indirect evidences to make some tentative hypothesis about the age of the industry. Technological studies show that most of the tools were made either on core or flake by the application of cylinder hammer technique, while the major types are ovate and Lanceolate Handaxes. It appears, therefore, that the industry may belong to any quarter of the upper Pleistocene period. The discovery of palaeolithic tools from lower gravel bed indicates that the artifact was, at best, contemporary with the sedimentation of Pleistocene period.

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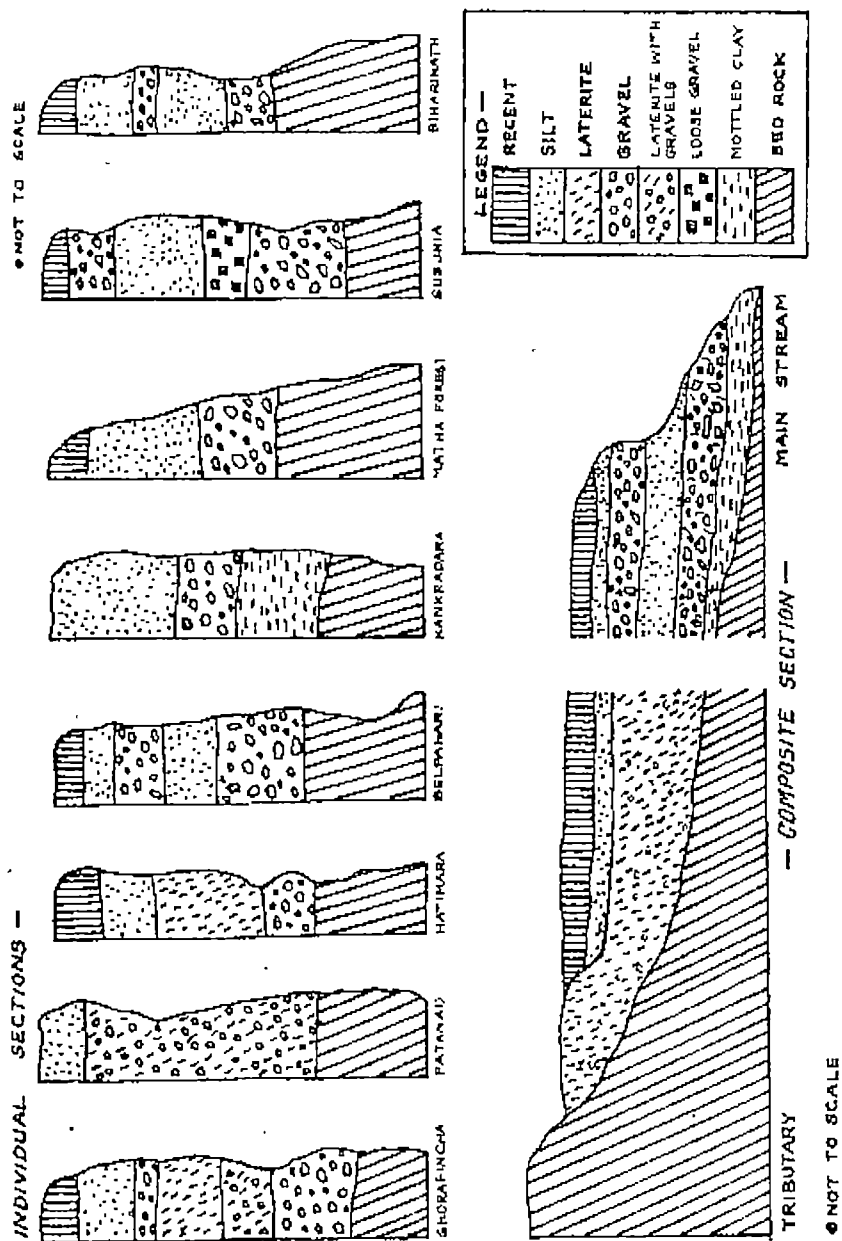


Fig No. 1 Showing the River Stratigraphy.

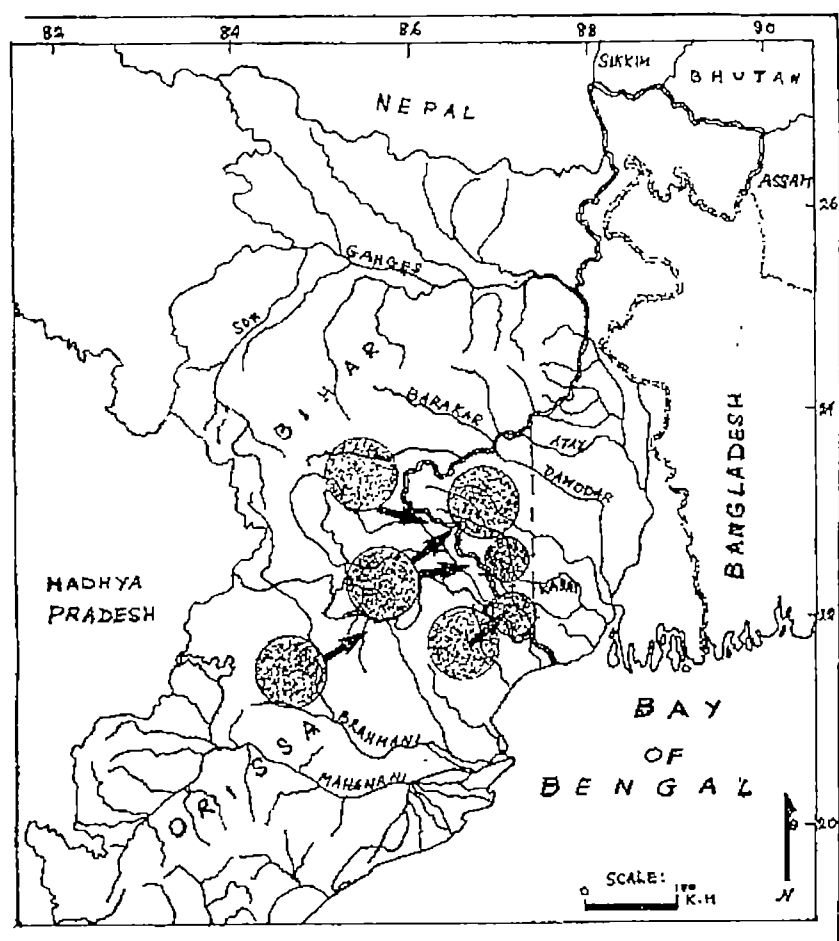


Fig No. 2. Showing the Route of diffusion of Lower Palaeolithic culture in Eastern India.

## EMERGENCE OF THE BACTRIAN LANGUAGE

B. N. Mukherjee

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata refers to Bāhlika Bhāshā (Bactrian language)<sup>1</sup>. Its affinity to Sogdian was suggested by Strabo, who stated that the Bactrians and Sogdians "speak nearly the same languages".<sup>2</sup>

Though the name of the Bactrian language had been known in antiquity, its character was not known until 1960. In that year W.B. Henning examined the language of the great Surkh Kotal epigraph<sup>3</sup>, the earliest known version of which had already been published by A. Maricq.<sup>4</sup>

According to Henning, the language of this inscription is Bactrian, a Middle Iranian One in which loan words from Iranian (Old Iranian, Sogdian, Parthian and Saka) and Indian (Sanskrit and Prakrit) sources are traceable. W.B. Henning observed that "it occupies an intermediary position between Pashto and Yidgha-Munji on the one hand, Sogdian, Khwarezmian, and Parthian on the other"<sup>5</sup>. To this list we may add North-Western Prakrit. Ancient Bactria of the late centuries B.C. and early centuries A.D. was situated below the Oxus, to the east of Margiane (including Merv) and to the east and north-east of Aria (including Herat) to the north of the Hindu-kush and perhaps to the west of the Alichur Pamir and the Ab-i-Panja (which is a continuation of the Oxus)<sup>6</sup>. So W. B. Henning was probably correct in naming the language Bactrian, following the territory of the main occurrence.<sup>7</sup>

The speakers of the Bactrian language adopted the Greek alphabet to write their speech, probably under the impact of the Hellenistic rule. The use of the language continued in Bactria at least up to C. 7th century A.D. It spread to Sogdiana and to the south-east of the Hindu-Kush in the Kushāṇa and post-Kushāṇa periods.<sup>8</sup> Hsüan-tsang noticed in the second quarter of the 7th century A.D. the use of twentyfive letters<sup>9</sup> (i.e. twentyfour basic Greek letters and Doric *san*). Among the latest use of the Bactrian language we can refer to the Bactrian version of the Tochi Valley inscription of the year 1032 or A.D. 862.<sup>10</sup>

In the vocabulary of the Bactrian language, so far as it is known to us, we find words of Iranian origin and also, in a much lesser degree, of Indian extraction. We can notice uses of noun, adjective, pronoun, verb, adverb, preposition and conjunction.

All words end in a vowel letter. The most common ending is o.

However, words terminating with *-a*, *-e*, *i* and *y(?)* are also known. In the cases of the stems ending in *-a*, the latter is generally replaced by *-o*, *e* or *i*, as required by the grammatical practice.

The letter *om̃cron*, appearing as the final character of a word used in a sentence, works in the majority of the cases as a word divider. It also stands as an indication of a case ending.

Final *-a* is found in feminine article (like *ia*) and feminine nouns (like *ia..... phromana* in an Airtam inscription). But final *-o* is found also in feminine nouns (like *ia phromano*, in line 17 as against *phromana* in line 21 of the Rabatak record).

Final *-e* is noticeable in masculine nouns and adjectives. "In this function *-e* seems interchangeable both with *-o* and with *-e*".<sup>11</sup> Final *-y*, used rarely, may be taken to have expressed the sound of *iota* [as in *ziry* (=śrī) in line 9 of the Rabatak epigraph].

The letter *iota* is considered to have been used as article ("the"). There are two cases-direct and oblique-and two numbers singular and plural. In direct case (nominative-accusative), *-o* indicates singular number and *-e* plural. In oblique case these are respectively *-e* (*saore*) or *-i* (*saodani*, *sal*) and *-ano ana* (*saonano*, *bagano*).

If the final *-o* is considered to have "functioned virtually as a word divider"<sup>12</sup> then a plural and not only a singular can be indicated by a word ending in that letter (as perhaps in *probao*, "rulers (s)", in line 6 of the Rabatak record). Similarly, the identification of a case need not be clearly marked. *Nlako* in line 13 of the Rabatak record, meaning "grandfather", is a noun, while *arougo*, appearing before *lundo* in lines 6-7 and in the phrase indicating "all or whole India", is used in the sense of an adjective.

In Bactrian verbs are mostly in past tense (*kirdo*, "made", *lado*, "gave", *phromado*, "commanded", etc., in the Rabatak epigraph *agado*, "came", in a Surkh-Kotal inscription, *ozooasto*, "led out", in a Surkh-Kotal inscription, etc.). *Nlbixto* or *nobixto* (in a Surkh-Kotal inscription), means "Written", (c.f. Sogdian *np̃xšī*, past perfect of *np̃yš*, "to write"). The relevant 3rd person plural perfect is *nibixtigendi* (in lines 11 and 17 of Rabatak/record). Some of the known conjugational indications are *-do* (or *-to*) (*kirdo*, *nibixto*) (3rd person singular perfect) *anda* (*ando*, *indi* or *indo*) (*zoxirianda*, *moboando*, *phroxortindi/o*) (3rd person plural perfect), *-eio* (*booeio*, "likes to be") 3rd person singular optative) and *ondeio* (*phroxoašondeio* "they like to go away") (3rd person plural optative).<sup>13</sup>

Our knowledge of the Bactrian language is still in its infancy. On the other hand, we are somewhat better informed about the palaeographic features of the Greek script in the Indo-Iranian borderlands from c. 3rd century B.C. onwards on the basis of inscriptions (including Aśoka's Shar-i-Kuna bilingual and Kandahar Greek edicts) and legends on coins of the Bactrian Greeks, Indo-Greeks, Scytho-Parthians, Kushāṇas and others (including later rulers).<sup>14</sup>

The Greek edicts of Aśoka have generally well-formed majuscule letters written normally in an upright style, with the characters engraved distinctly. The characters are ordinarily not joined with one another. Letters are well formed on numerous early Bactrian Greek coins. But these are written with a slant in several inscriptions at Ai-Khanum of the Hellenistic age. Lunate *sigma* is noticeable. In certain cases the characters are engraved in a cursive style. Square and lunate *sigma*, square *omicron* and "squarish" *rho*, *omega* and *phi* are noticeable on different Scytho-Parthian coins. The number of misformed letters noticeable on the coins of the Indo-Greeks, particularly of the later phase of their rule, increased on the coins of the Scytho-Parthians. On early pieces of reformed coinage of the Kushāṇas the letters are tolerably clear. Gradually cursiveness appears in the forms of the letters. On the coins of the later period of the Imperial Kushāṇas the letters are often slovenly.<sup>15</sup>

The Greek characters in the Bactrian version of the Dasht-e-Nawur record include many ill formed letters. The letters in the readable portions of the Rabatak inscription are not all well-formed. Cursiveness in style of writing can be noticed at least in certain sections of the record. Certain forms of letters have peculiarities. However, the letters are engraved more carefully in the three copies of the Great Surkh-Kotal inscription, particularly in the version published by A Maricq. The use of Doric *san* (or *sigma*), and the employment of *upsilon*, *omicron*, etc. for conveying sound other than the primary one are very much noticeable in the Kushāṇa records. The joining of cursive letters with connecting lines, noticeable occasionally in the Kushāṇa period became gradually accentuated in the post-Kushāṇa age.<sup>16</sup> The extreme cursiveness in certain post-Kushāṇa coin legends and documents make their reading very different.<sup>17</sup>

The development of the script in Bactria and its neighbouring areas is gradually becoming an interesting branch of Greek palaeography.<sup>18</sup> The Bactrian language itself has already become an important source language for reconstructing the history of

ancient India and Central Asia, especially of the Kushāṇa age. The Rabatak inscription claims that Kanishka I replaced the use of "Ionian speech" (i.e. Greek language) by "The Arya Speech" (i.e. an Aryan language meaning in the context the Middle Iranian and so an Aryan or Indo-European language like Bactrian).<sup>19</sup> He seems to have made Bactrian the official language of the empire. It is significant that the longest document of the dynastic history of the Kushāṇas, so far known, is the Rabatak Bactrian record.<sup>20</sup> The Bactrian language is gradually emerging from oblivion with all its glory.

#### Notes & Reference :

1. Bharata, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, XVII, 48-52.
2. Strabo, *Geographikon*, XV, 2, 8.
3. W.B. Henning, "The Bactrian Inscription", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (hereafter BSOAS), Vol. XXIII, 1960, p. 47f.
4. *Journal Asiatique*, 1958, Vol. CCXLVI, no. 4, pp. 345-440.
5. BSOAS, Vol. XXIII, 1960, p. 47.
6. According to Ptolemy, "Baktriane is bounded on the west by Margiane.... on the north and east by Sogdiana, along the course of the river Oxus, and on the south by the rest of Areia, extending from the extreme point towards Margiane" (Ptolemy, *Geographike Huphegesis*, VI, II, I). Areia, i.e. Aria, or the Herat region was on the west and south-west of Bactria. Sogdiana of Ptolemy's description was between inter alia the Oxus and the Iamartes rivers (VI, 12, 1-2).
7. BSOAS, 1960, Vol. XXII, No. I, p. 47.
8. B.Y. Staviski, *Buddhiskle Pescheri, V. Starom Termeze*, 1963-64, Moscow. 1969, pp. 47f.; *Bulletin de l' Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient* (hereafter BEFEO), 1974, p. 18; etc.
9. *Ta T'ang Hsi-yu-chi*, Chuan I. Hsüan-tsang noticed the use of twentyfive letters in the Tukhāra country, which included the major part of ancient Bactria and a section of Sogdiana to the north of the Oxus.
10. B.N. Mukherjee, *Central and South Asian Documents on the Old Śaka Era*, Varanasi, 1973, (hereafter CSADOSE), pp. 60-61.

11. N. Sims-William and J. Cribb, A New Bactrian Inscription of Kaniska the Great "*Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, 1995-96, p. 89 (hereafter NBIK), p. 89.
12. W.B. Henning, "The Bactrian Inscription", *BSOAS*, Vol. XXIII, 1960, p. 50.
13. In this connection see *ibid.*, pp. 47f; G.D. Davary, *Baktrisch-Ein Worterbuch*, Heidelberg, 1982 (hereafter BW), pp. 136f; NBIK, pp. 88-89; etc.
14. The Greek script might have been known in the Indo-Iranian borderlands before the invasion of Alexander. By the term *Yavanani* Pāṇini of c. 5th century B.C. probably meant the Greek script (*Ashtādhyāyī*, IV, I, 19; V. S. Agrawala, *India as Known to Pāṇini*, Lucknow, 1953, p. 312). For a general account about the early development of the Greek script, See D. Diringer, *The Alphabet*, 2nd edition, reprint, London, 1953, pp. 453f.  
An ostrakon inscribed in the Aramaic script, unearthed at Ai-Khanum, is doubtfully guessed to have been written in the Bactrian language "transliterated into (the) Aramaic script" (P. Bernard, *Fouilles d', A' i' Khanoum, Campagnes de 1971*, Paris, 1972, pp. 631-32, F.R. Allchin and N. Hammond, *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, London, 1978, p. 199.
15. B.N. Mukherjee, *Studies in the Aramaic Edicts of Aśoka*, Calcutta, 1984 pls. VI and VIII; P. Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins in the British Museum, The coins of the Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India*, London, 1886, pls. If and XVII and XXVI f; C. Rapin, "Les Inscriptions de la Thésoreic Hellenistique d'A'i Khanoum (Afghanistan)", *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellenizque*, 1983, Vol. CVII, I études, pp. 323f; A Cunningham, *Later Indo-Scythians*, reprint, Varanasi, 1962, pls. If.
16. *BEFEO*, Vol. LXI, 1974, pl. III; H. Humbach, *Baktrische Sprachdenkmaler*, Wiesbaden, 1966 (hereafter BS), Vol. II, pls. 1-9, 17-20 and 23-25; B.Y. Stavisky, *op. cit.*, pls. 10f; B.N. Mukherjee, *The Great Kushāna Testament*, (published as the Indian Museum Bulletin, Vol. XXX), Calcutta, 1995, pls. IV-X); BW, p. 53f.
17. *BS*, pls. 28f.
18. R. Gobl, "Grundriss eines historischen Palaographie o der Kuśānmunzen", *Iranica Antiqua*, Vol. I, 1961, pp. 93f.
19. *GKT*, pp. 66; 14; 11. 3-4; p. 16, 11. 3-4.
20. *ibid.*, pp. 3f. this short article is based on pp. 3-5 (Chapter II, section I, of *GKT*).



## **EVOLUTION OF THE BENGALI LANGUAGE : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE FORMATIVE STAGE**

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The present paper portrays an attempt on my part to vitalize my essential premise in projecting the idea of the significant role of the "folk" heritage in identity formation and cultural structuring through times, within specific frameworks of history. I have chosen the framework of early medieval language heritage in the regions that we now frame in the political map of India as: West Bengal, Assam, Orissa, parts of Bihar and outside India, Bangladesh. In perusing on the subject I have crossed roads with an extremely technical subject: that of linguistics. I am not conversant with the technical aspects of the subject, but here I am only trying to structure the historical genre within which early Bengali language emerged. At the same time I wish to draw attention to the fact, that, joint attempts of the specialists in linguistics and those from the domain of history, could be made in framing a history of linguistic heritage, which should form the core of any research on cultural history. A culture expresses itself through a language. This lends an identity-specificity, representing a symbolic microcosm of the entire world populating that culture. Language therefore constitutes a significant decisive factor in the identity formation process. In situating my premise of revealing the cognitive paradigm of the "folk" I have leant heavily on the literary tradition in this paper. I have also related this to the archaeological evidences to support some of my observations. My main aim is to see how far the processes of cultural adoption, adaptation and assimilation can be discerned within the format of the Early Medieval Bengal history. I am also trying to identify the social group among whom this process can be noted to have proliferated. Lastly I am trying to cull out reasons for this fermentation, so far as factors like temporality, geography and ethnographical genesis are concerned. The tool I am using is empirical data observation and a contextual analysis. I would

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welcome any observation or input from the specialists in linguistics for enriching my research.

*Gauḍa*, *Pundra* and *Varendra* in the north; *Rāḍha* and *Suhma* in the west; *Vaṅga*, *Vaṅgāla*, *Samatata* and *Harikela* in the east comprised a region where, from the tenth century AD. onwards, a distinct linguistic and cultural tradition emerged. This development qualified the region for an ethno-cultural identification. The whole exercise of retrieving the history of the Bengali language requires a study of the emergence of this identification.

Recent readings on the history of the Bengali language regard the *Charyā Gītis* as the origin point of the proto-Bengali language, if not the spring-board of the language itself, Historically speaking, the tone of the *Charyā* literature could provide the clue to the actual social heritage of the language. The tracing of the socio-cultural roots of the regional dialect is an important factor in writing the history, of not only the language, but the culture itself.

Apart from an analysis of the authorship of the *Charyās*, the history of the formative period also demands a search for the crystallizing of the identification of the Bengali culture or Bengali people in the sources of the early medieval and medieval times.

A language is the creation of a people. Bengali, a late-born sapling from the Buddhistic Sanskrit, would be historically linked up with the people who nurtured it, their religious and cultural traits, and the eco-cultural environment of the region where it is bred. All these provided a favorable ambience for the growth of the distinct regional dialect. The case of the associated growth of the sibling languages like the Oriya and the Assamese is to be analysed from the angle of a greater eco-cultural zonal development, where regionality and historic trends of this regionality are important reference points.

The paper aims to focus on these points in order to build a holistic picture of the setting and growth of a regional language from its inception.

#### LINGUISTIC TRADITION :

According to linguists Bengali language evolved through a long process of development and assimilation between the 8th and the 10th centuries A.D. This was a result of the dynamic evolution of the ancient Indo-Aryan language.

Prakrit or oral version got dressed into several regional dialects, viz., Saurasenī, Mahārāshtrī, Māgadhī and Paisāchī. Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa took birth, probably from the Buddhistic hybrid Sanskrit,<sup>1</sup> which falls under the category of Middle Indo-Aryan language group. Māgadhī Apabhraṃśa had been included in the drama of Aśvaghṣha (2nd century AD).<sup>2</sup> The passages possess noteworthy peculiarities. However, this Māgadhī was not a genuine spoken dialect at the time, as S.K. Chatterji points out<sup>3</sup>. Probably it was an imitation of the spoken dialect. According to him the Bengali dialect evolved out of the Māgadhī Prakrit in the period between the 6th and the 10th centuries AD.

There is the possibility that the speech of Magadha came to Bengal during the Maurya period within the time frame of the first stage of Middle Indo-Aryan. But then it developed on the soil of Bengal, at first as the transplant colonists' speech. This was constantly strengthened by the coming of fresh immigrants and through centuries reached the second stage of Middle Indo-Aryan. There are however, only the Eastern Inscriptions of Asoka and a few Brāhmī seals from Bihar and hence, there are no authentic specimens of the local spoken language. We can roughly hypothesize that during the 600-1000 A.D., the forms of the late Māgadhī Prakrit or Māgadhī apabhraṃśa was emerging as a spoken language on the soil of the five regions identified as Bengal: Rāḍha, Varenrda, Variga, Chāṭṭala and Samatāṭa, corresponding to West Bengal, North-Central Bengal, East Bengal, South-East Bengal and the Delta region.

R.C. Majumdar explains that the hiatus between the Sanskrit literature of the Gupta period in the region of Magadha, when Bengal was but a budding regional centre of the empire and the Pāla period productions may be explained by the political lacuna extending between the periods of Śaśāṅka and Gopāla. However, the emergence of a format of vernacular language in this region is a historic and logical probability. In fact S.K. Chatterji argues that although the connected specimens of the language of Magadha and Bengal are lacking from after the Maurya period to the 10th century, it was during this period that Bengali and its sister speeches evolved (Assamese, which is intimately connected, almost identical with Bengali; Oriya, almost equally close to Bengali; Maithili of North Bihar and Magahi of South Bihar, and Bhojpuriya of West Bihar and the eastern U.P.). Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa is another composer, who wrote

the 'BenīSaṁhāra' which is a unique addition from the *Mahābhārata* genre. It is based on the *Vīra rasa* and contains the dramatic format of a war-ballad. Especially, it is in this composition where we get an illustration of the Gaudī riti. A number of technical and Dharmaśāstra texts were composed in the Pāla period (9th-11th centuries), using Sanskrit as medium. Seats of learning became famous among which feature Uttara Rāḍha as a region, which was described as the ornament of Āryāvarta. Vikramapura, Varendra and Bhūriśreṣṭhi in Dakṣiṇa Rāḍha were important centres of Sanskrit learning. Tāmrālipti in Rāḍha was another famous centre. The study of the Vedas, Mimāṃsā, Dharmasūtras, Purāṇas, Epics, Arthaśāstra, Jyotiṣa, Tarkaśāstras, Kāvya, Vyākaraṇa, Alāṅkāras, Āyurveda, Tantra etc. were the different subjects pursued by the Sanskritised populace of the region. Sanskrit was the chief medium of this learning. It was the spoken dialect that is our interest. As far as this dialect is concerned there is a long historical background that has to be surveyed. It may be stated at the outset that the mixed linguistic tradition of the region did have a substantial influence on the social and cultural life.

#### **SURVEY OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CAUSATION OF THE LINGUISTIC HERITAGE :**

The historical and social anthropological evidences reveal a plural ethnographic heritage in the region, which has been identified by me as greater Bengal. This greater Bengal comprises all the regions mentioned above referred to in early historical epigraphs and literature. I have noted a historical, ethnographical as well as cultural homogeneity throughout this region in the early historic and early medieval times. Ecologically, this region comprises the subtropical deltaic and coastal stretch, with the Bihar-Bengal plateau in west-central and the deciduous foothill tract of Himalayas in the north. The region abounds in rivers and is an extremely fertile tract. Protohistoric and early historic evidences point to a mixed agricultural and riverine economy. However, the mineral belt running through Singbhum, Manbhum, Rajmahal down to Mayurbhanj was utilized for surface mining and there was strong component of metal handling among the folks and tribes since early historic times. The wide, navigable Gaṅgā-Padmā complex and the coastal belt offered opportunities for commercial intercourse, which was the main reason for political penetration since Maurya days.

The communicability of the region evoked infusion of linguistic and cultural assimilation at every historical stage. Anthropologically, the diverse races that occupied Bengal since early times are: Austric of the Mon-Khmer group, Dravidian speakers, and later Tibeto-Chinese or rather the Tibeto-Burman tribes. The linguistic situation must have been complex with lot of assimilation and mixtures going on. A variety of the Eastern Prakrit first overflowed into Bengal probably with the infiltration of Māgadhi settlers, traders, administrators etc<sup>5</sup>. The vernacular of Bengal was still in the Middle Bengali stage. Yet it took a definite form and is described as "proto-Bengali" by 800 A.D., during the reign of Dharmapāla. S. K. Chatterji<sup>6</sup> links up the emergence of the Pāla Empire with the crystallization of a regional Bengali culture, in which the linguistic typicality formed an important factor. This took place with the fusion of the Māgadhi Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa dialects into a uniform proto-Bengali type. The earliest literature that was found to belong to the old Bengali prototype are the Buddhist Dohās. The manuscripts of the 47 dohās are composed in Old Bengali with Sanskrit commentary. Three others are composed in Śaurasenī Apabhraṃśa with Sanskrit commentaries. This apabhraṃśa is said to have flourished in Bengal early, around the 1000 A.D. Therefore, the Śaurasenī Apabhraṃśa and the native speech of Bengal, Proto-Bengali circulated in the regions identified as Bengal of present. The character of the Dohā language point to the budding of a New Indo-Aryan speech. Its idioms are familiar and Bengali. Bengali proverbs feature in the Dohās., which have continued to the 20th century.

According to S.K. Chatterji<sup>7</sup> the Bengalis are mainly derived from a branch of the Aryans. They have been mentioned in the *Altareya Āraṇyaka*. There has been a reference to the region of Vaṅga, which is the Bangladesh of today. However, the composition of the populace was mixed and contained a large number of non-Aryan tribes, whose language is lost except a few stray words. A number of scholars have the opinion that these tribes belonged to the Austric and Dravidian linguistic groups. After the adoption of the Sanskrit language in the northern India, the Prakrit or oral version emerged among the common people. Sanskrit remained an elite language. A number of spoken versions of Prakrit gradually emerged in different regions: 1) Śaurasenī, 2) Mahārāṣṭrī, 3) Māgadhi, and 4) Paisācī. Of these the first three are often adopted in some Sanskrit dramas to lend colour and social locus to their stories. Pāli, a Prakrit version of Sanskrit practiced in the north-

central region, became the textual and preaching medium of the Buddhists, as also the medium for the Aśokan edicts. In all these multiple developments the importance of the local and mass ingredients are implicit in the formation of a language. The case of Bengali is especially interesting from this point of view. It has a hybrid root which follows from its regionality and its particularistic regional history.

As far as the linguistic heritage of any culture is concerned Bijoy Chandra Majumdar writes<sup>8</sup> "..... a language is mainly, if not wholly, determined by the grammar and structure and not by the vocabulary which may swell by the process of word-borrowing. I should also add here that the accent system is a great factor in a language, and should be considered as an essential element of it, different forms of apabhraṃśas in different dialects of one common original speech are partly due to different accent systems. It will be necessary, therefore, to refer to the accent systems of our neighbouring tribes to solve some points of difficulty. In ignorance of the fact that some non-Aryan speeches exercised some influence upon Bengali, and misled by the description of our language as Sanskrit, many capable scholars have devoted themselves of late to the ingenious but wasteful work of digging out Sanskrit roots and stems for such Bengali words and inflections as are entirely of other origin." He asked<sup>9</sup> scholars to consider : 1) ".....carefully the geographical limits of ancient Vaṅga or Bengal which has given our language its distinctive name and the character of the tribe or tribes which inhabited the area previous to the settlement of the people who brought in what may be termed a form of Aryan speech. Along with these must also be considered the ancient political or ethnical character of other tracts which, together with the ancient Vaṅga constituted the province of Bengal where Bengali is the dominant language." And, "The Aryans or Aryanised and the non-Aryan hordes which made inroads into Bengal, from the earliest known time to the end of the 12th century A.D., i.e., up to the time of the Muhammadan influence in Bengal, and secured settlements in different parts of the country, must also be taken into account to explain some factors which generally appear anomalous in our language." In searching for the antiquity of the concept and knowledge of the region "Vaṅga" we have already seen how it featured in the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, as a tribe of people in conjunction with Magadha. In the *Atharva Veda* pariśiṣṭa too the word 'Vaṅga' appears in connection with Magadha as a component

of a compound word. However, the *pariśiṣṭa* part is of a late origin. Bijoy Chandra Majumdar regards, that before the 6th c. B.C. *Vaṅga* was not colonized by the Aryans<sup>10</sup>. Reference to *Videha* is found in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. The story of *Vijay Simha*, a prince of Bengal, however, clarifies the history that the region had come into a political identity by the 5th century B.C. Bijoy Chandra Majumdar cites palaeontological evidence to show that the people of Bengal carried with them the spoken language of *Magadha* to *Srilanka*. So the prevalence of *Magadh's* spoken language, a *Prakrit* version, *Māgadhi* in the region of *Vaṅga* as early as the 5th-4th centuries B.C. cannot be ruled out<sup>11</sup>. In the *Baudhāyaṇa Dharma sūtra*<sup>12</sup> *Sarasvatī* is described as disappearing to the west of *Kālākavaṇā*, which is said to have extended beyond the south and southeast of *Magadha*, thus probably covering also Bengal. *Vāśiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*<sup>13</sup>, however, grudgingly extends the limits of the *Āryāvarta* on the authority of 'some' and 'others'. By default Bengal fell under extended *Āryāvarta*. In verses XIII and XIV, *Vāśiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* mentions that the people or peoples of *Aṅga*, *Magadha*, *Avanti* and others lying close to the land of the *Āryas*, are of the mixed origin, while the lands of the *Puṇḍras*, the *Vaṅgas* and the *Kaliṅgas* are so unholy that one should go through a penance on ones's return from those countries. The accounts of the Greeks left the reference of *Gangaridae*<sup>14</sup>, which belong to the 1st century A.D. and 2nd. Century A.D. On the other hand there is the counterpart of evidences from *Burma*. The *Hindus* are said to have poured into *Burma* around 923 B.C. (Col. Gerini and Phayre) The people from Bengal formed a powerful colony in *Annam* around the 7th Century B.C. according to the traditional and legendary accounts relating to *Annam* as are reported to appear in some Chinese records. In the *Sabhā Parvan*<sup>15</sup> of the *Māhābhārata*, the *Pāṇḍavas* are said to have conquered *Vaṅga* after subverting the *Puṇḍras* and to have led their victorious soldiers to *Suhma* after devastating *Vaṅga*.

Parts of *Orissa* and *Ganjam* were brought under Bengal during *Śaśāṅkas's* rule, where *Oriya* language now prevails. *Puṇḍra* and *Suhma* were closely linked with *Vaṅga* from early times. Dr. *Nazimuddin Ahmed* writes<sup>16</sup> : "Puṇḍranagar mentioned in the epigraphic records of the *Mauryas*, the *Guptas*, the *Pālas* and the *Senas* and in numerous ancient literary references preserve the memory of a forgotten people-the *Puṇḍra* (variant forms, *Puṇḍraka* and *Paṇḍra*) who seem to have originally inhabited this part of the country in the distant past before the advent of the *Aryans* and of

whom virtually nothing is known today.” Nazimuddin Ahmed talks about the stray references in ancient texts to tribes of Puṇḍras, Vaṅga, Suhma existing beyond the Aryan pale described as Niṣāḍas or dasyus. References to Puṇḍravardhana is available in the Buddhist and Jaina texts like *Aśokāvadāna*, *Divyāvadāna*, *Kalpasūtra* etc. In *Divyāvadāna* the Jaina sect of Nirgranthas are mentioned as inhabiting Puṇḍravardhana<sup>17</sup>. By the middle of the 6th century A.D. a number of small kingdoms emerged in the region of Bengal, of which Vaṅga and Gauḍa were very powerful<sup>18</sup>. Samatāṭa was a separate kingdom. The Imperial Guptas held Gauḍa under strong control but Vaṅga and Gauḍa were never centrally controlled. Gauḍa lay to the north of Kośala and north west of Mithilā. Yaśovarman is described in *Gauḍa-vaho* as the victorious king leading his troops in to the territory of the ruler of Gauḍa whose territory lay far to east near the sea coast<sup>19</sup>. About the term Gauḍa, Majumdar makes a hypothesis from its use in Orissa at present, that it is a *apabhraṁśa* from *gopāla*, the cowherds. People who keep cattle and sell milk are called *gauḍa* at present in Orissa<sup>20</sup>. We get the name of a tribe called *gomanta* in *Mārkaṇḍeya*<sup>21</sup> and *Vāyu Purāṇas*<sup>22</sup>. The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* also mentions the *Pravaṅgas* or people of Vaṅga and stray tribes among them are mentioned separately, *Māla*, *Mahiṣika* and *Mānavātikas*<sup>23</sup>, which may be linked up with originators of the geographical name *Mānbhum*, a portion of *Rāḍha-Vaṅga*. Large tracts of Sambalpur, Chattisgarh (M.P.), Ganjam were intimately connected with the ethnohistory of *Vaṅga-Rāḍha*. Throughout the regions discussed here *Māgadha* and *Mithilā* speeches were adopted. Majumdar's<sup>24</sup> research shows that not only the Dravidian speeches but other speeches too left their influence on what now we term as Bengali. He points out that although the people closely allied with the Dravidian speeches form the bulk of the Bengali speaking population, yet, in the pronunciation of cerebral letters, the conversion of them to dental letters is pronounced. This, Majumdar tries to explain, by drawing a Kiranti influence for the regional speech form. These *Kirātas* are earliest referred to in the *Atharva Veda*. They are traditionally described as a mountain people. The inclusion of Tibetan and Mongolian dialects also cannot be ruled out for northern and western Bengal as historical evidence shows a close cultural and religious connection with these regions. So far as phonology is concerned there are lines of provinciality distinguished by researchers, which covers the Oriya and Assamese speeches of contemporary times too. With



reference to the accents of speech, the Bengali thoroughly agrees with the Vedic style. But in Oriya the accent is different although it too has its accent system. In Oriya, as in Sanskrit, all the letters and words are pronounced as distinct independent syllables. The accent of the standard Bengali speech and the eastern Bengal spoken variety are also different from each other. Mr. J.D. Anderson of the Bengal Civil Service had found the eastern Bengal accent and the Assamese accent similar and had postulated an Assamese influence for the former. However it was just the contrary.<sup>25</sup> It may be surmised that the ethnohistory of the regions of W. Bengal, Bangladesh, Orissa and Assam are so closely linked up that this provinciality becomes a self-projecting phenomenon. In analysing the use and meaning of words, Majumdar has successfully illustrated the fact that throughout Bengal a variety of terms are in use to denote the same thing and that often in this use of specific terms and their meanings the regions outside Bengal proper, i.e., Sambalpur in Orissa or Bhojpur region in Bihar are seen to share common linguistic bonds<sup>26</sup>.

In discovering the cultural derivatives of the Bengali language our evidences point to the Buddhist and Jain traditions of the Maurya and Kuṣāṇa times. The Jaina canonical works do not date previous to the last half of the 5th century A.D. The language in which these are composed is the Eastern Māgadhi Prakrit of a time not later than the 6th century AD. This language was probably circulating in the eastern parts of Bihar between the 3rd and the 6th centuries. The similarities between this language and the standard Bengali as well as the Eastern Bengali and Oriya are easily noted <sup>27</sup>.

Majumdar clarifies<sup>28</sup> : "We see that the class of literary Prākṛita, Māgadhi, Śaurasenī and Mahārāṣṭrī, do not give us such definite material as may enable us to determine the character of the Māgadhi speech with which we are mainly concerned in tracing the history of the Bengali language. The early Māgadhi speech, Pāli, and the Jaina Prākṛita are seen to be closely related to Bengali. There are enough materials to examine the various forms of Māgadhi speech which transformed itself into Bengali. We can also see clearly that the verses in the *Prākṛita Paṭhgaḷa* final composition dated to the 14th century A.D., are genuine predecessors of the modern Bengali form"<sup>29</sup>. However, we have an earlier prototype in the Buddhist dohakoṣa. Although, after the initial identification of the language of dohakoṣa as a proto-Bengali, the scholars argued

that it contained more of Śaurasenī apabhraṁśa, which was the precursor of Hindi. The geographical, ethnographical allusions apart, the linguistic studies of Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyaya point to a Bengali origin in the dohās. It has been assumed that at the time, the apabhraṁśas were widely used in the region and gradually, the local pre-Bengali spoken words, idioms and dialects were inserted within the framework of the apabhraṁśa. Bhudev Chaudhuri<sup>30</sup> has asserted that the charyās were a volume of literature of this period of dawning Bengali language. Asit Bandyopadhyaya<sup>31</sup> also begins his anthology of Bengali literature with the dohās. Bhudev Chaudhuri has cited other examples as containing the seeds of Bengali language. For example, the *Mānasollasa* or *Abhilārtha Chintāmaṇi* composed under the patronage of the Chālukya King Bhulokamalla, contains a chapter on Gītbinod. Some of the verses in this portion reveal the presence of a proto-Bengali version. This has also been discussed by Suniti Kumar Chatterjee. Both he and Sukumar Sen have noted the text of the *Prākṛita Paiṅgala* to contain the seeds of the proto-Bengali. Dinesh Chandra Sen has included the names of *Śūnya Purāṇa*, and poetic compositions like *Mainamatir Gaan* and *Gorakṣha Vijaya* as belonging to this genre. But in this essay we shall limit ourselves to a discussion of the dohākoṣa only as we purport to relate it to the intellectual and social background in the development of the vernacular of the region. The Dohās reveal that background and provide possible hypothetical framework for restructuring the environs of cultural regionality. Apart from the literary evidences, a large portion of the history of this period and region can be read from the perusal of the archaeological evidences. These provide physical ingredient of the context within which the regional culture evolved. Therefore let us take a look.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCES FOR CULTURAL PLURALITY :

Archaeological evidences abound to show the presence of a mixed, hybrid religion in greater Bengal. Various monuments of Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jaina affinities dot the geography of the different divisions of ancient Bengal. Itakhola Vihāra<sup>32</sup> in the Coomilla district in the Hilly tracts of the Lalmai-Mainamati region, couches a Buddhist monastery operational between the 7th and the 13th centuries A.D. The history of Mainamati region goes back to the Gupta times, as it is a part of Samatāṭa mentioned in the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta (4th C.A.D.) and again in the

copperplate of Vainyagupta (506-7 A.D.). There are other sites of importance in the region,<sup>33</sup> namely, Salban Vihāra (7th century A.D.), Ānanda Vihāra (date not ascertained but before the 10th C.A.D.), Kuṭila Murā with Tri-ratna stūpas (7th C.A.D.), Bhoj Vihāra, temple of Rani Mainamati, a wellknown figure in Bengali folk genre. The most famed monument being the Paharpur complex in the Rajshahi District of Bangladesh. It houses a Buddhist monastery and stūpas. The Somapurī vihāra in Paharpur built in the Pāla period is the epitome of the patronization of the Pāla kings of Varendra for the Buddhist religion. The contemporary Deva and Chandra kings of Samatāṭa were also devout Buddhists. Another complex exists in the extensive ruins of Mahasthangarh, on the western banks of the Karatoyā river in the Bogra District. The ancient Puṇḍranagara is identified in the Maurya records dated to the 3rd century B.C. The Gupta and Pāla records also identify the region. Here is a mixture of the Brahmanical Kārtikeya temple or locally known Skander dhap, Govinder Bhita temple, a local folk lore association in the Lakshindarer Medh and some Buddhist monasteries at Vasu Vihara.<sup>34</sup> In the State of West Bengal several important religious complexes have been identified and excavated. The Śaiva Temple at Bāṇeśvara Danga in the Burdwan District (Gupta-Pāla periods); Śaṇḍeśvara and Śaileśvara temples in Bankura District (11th c. A.D.); Buddhist remains in the Rajbari Danga, Rangamati, in the Mursidabad District (6th -7th C.A.D.), Tulabhita Dhibi in the Maldah district where an inscription of King Mahendrapāla has been discovered dating to 10th-11th C.A.D. which speaks of the Nandadī rghikā Udraṅga Mahāvihāra<sup>35</sup>. A number of Brahmanical temples are found scattered all over the Bengal region. Several epigraphs record the grant of villages and resources by the Pāla kings for the construction of Brahmanical temples. Nārāyaṇapāla's copperplate grant records the establishment of a thousand storied Saiva Temple. The Bengal temple architecture constitutes a special stylistic contribution to the evolution of Indian temple architecture.

The sculptural and literary evidences, taken together, also point to the development of a complex social and religious scenario in early medieval Bengal (greater). The Pāśupata sect of Saivism was quite prominent in Bengal. The Śākta cult developed in this region. The wave of Saktism current in Bengal during the 7th-8th centuries A.D. is derived from the evidence of *Devī Purāṇa*. The *Purāṇa* itself seems to have been composed in eastern region if seen

in the light of frequent mention of places like Kāmarūpa, Kāmākhyā, Vaṅga, Rāḍha, Varendra, Samataṭa and Vardhamāna. The Paharpur panel depicts a man holding his tuft of hair in the left hand is about to sever his own head with a sword held in the right. The scene is likely to represent a symbol of devotion to the mother goddess.

From the 12th century onwards Saktism as a cult developed full swing in Bengal. According to different iconographic features, the Śakti images recovered from different parts of Bengal are Chaṇḍī Devī, Pārvatī, Sarvamaṅgalā, Bhūvaneśvarī, Dūrgā, Mahiṣāsuramardinī and others<sup>36</sup>. Saivism was also extremely popular an over these regions<sup>37</sup>. The *liṅga* images, which were at first the only symbolic representations of Śiva are found in many places throughout the region. The next depiction comes in the form of the face of Śiva being inscribed on one side of the liṅgam. The full Chandraśekhara images also became popular later. Another major cult, which developed in eastern India, was the Solar cult in the early medieval times. A terracotta sun image was found at Chandraketugarh of 24 Parganas, belonging to the Kuṣāṇa period. Śaśāṅka brought twelve brahmins from the region of Sarayū river to worship the sun god in order to treat an incurable disease<sup>38</sup>. Numerous sun images are found in the Pāla stage of civilization in Bengal, indicating the continued popularity of the cult. The Nāgarakhaṇḍa of the *Skanda Purāṇa* mentions a centre of Solar Cult at a place called Mundira. It has not been identified yet with certainty. But the Konark temple devoted to this cult deity stands as a possible centre. Vaisnavism was another very popular cult within the Brahmanical order of religion that flourished in early Medieval Bengal. Trivikrama Viṣṇu image as well his consorts Śrī and Puṣṭi common in the east. Garuḍa, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī are also popular. The Viṣṇu image, with the images of Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī sitting on its hands, from Maldah, probably indicates a Vajrayāna Buddhist influence<sup>39</sup>. Śrī or Lakṣmī is also depicted alone as the Gajalakṣmī version. Many-faced Brahmā image is also found as is the four-handed Sarasvatī. These are all indicative of the proliferation of regional religious styles in iconography, which arose as an integral part of the new religious ideas and rites associated with the current of adaptation and adoption of the local, regional, popular, non-Sanskritic traditions, in which Bengal was extremely rich. Buddhism and Jainism also expressed their religious fervour

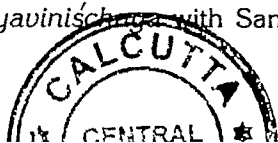
through depictions of several avatāras of the Bodhisattva and the Tīrthaṅkaras, Nāthas, respectively. The inclusion of Navagrahas along with the Tīrthaṅkara figure, noted in the image complex discovered in the Burdwan district probably again relates to the fact of assimilation of different cults and their symbols. In fact Buddhism is more of a case that illustrates this syncretism that took place in early medieval Bengal.

#### **BUDDHISM IN EARLY MEDIEVAL BENGAL AND THE DONHAS:**

Buddhism was losing its hold throughout the northern India. But it flourished to a great extent during the Pāla rule in greater Bengal. The religion modified itself to fit the regional colour and thought. The emergence of the Tāntrika cult profoundly influenced Buddhism and the old Sarvāstivāda and Sammitivāda doctrines were replaced in popular sphere by the Vajrayāna and Tantrayāna cults of Buddhism. These new schools came to be known in the contemporary terms of the Sahajayāna Dharma. The moral preceptors of these schools were called the Siddhāchāryas. Legend has it that there were 84 Siddhāchāryas in Bengal between the 10th and the 12th centuries A.D.<sup>40</sup> Their philosophy is phrased in songs and verses, which reveal a surprising social awareness. There are criticisms of contemporary religious and social practices in the early dohā songs from this genre, which display a rational bent and a similarity with the modern, westernized critique of the closed-in Brahmanical traditions. Probably Buddhism adapted and identified itself with the common people of Bengal, who were in majority linked with a non-Aryan past. The sculptural remains of greater Bengal reveal the influence of the Puranic tradition. But this tradition was restricted among the elite and rich classes. Sanskrit literature also reached the educated elite. The Sahajayāna cult belonged to the popular section of Bengal. S.K. Chatterji, R.C. Majumdar and Nihar Ranjan Ray<sup>41</sup> have pointed out this fact. The expressions contained in the dohās reflect an attitude of antipathy to the caste system. Since Bengal was inhabited by non-Aryan populace in a majority, this attitude represents the stand of the greater majority. Sahajayāna appear to have made its clientele among this majority. And it is within this genre that we have the earliest prototype of the Bengali vernacular language. The whole importance of this development in all its features should be explored in greater details in order to situate the cultural background of Bengal in a holistic historical and anthropological

framework. Without this the studies on the linguistic or religious peculiarity or typicality of the region lose their basic parameters. Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay wrote in an essay<sup>42</sup> about the intimate relationship between the regional identity and the regional language. Several factors operated in the formation of the Bengali identity. The adoption of the Sanskritic religions along with the heretical religions within the Sanskritic scope along with the mixture of the races or speakers of different languages helped in syncretism. The gradual adoption of the Māgadhī apabhraṃśa of Sanskrit in the times between 300 B.C. and the 500 A.D., by the Austric and Dravidian speakers in Bengal is discussed by Chattopadhyaya. He finds all these factors to have inculcated the seeds of the regional identity which was however, related to the general cultural tune of northern and southern India. What he did not discuss however, was the intellection of the Bengali populace within the socio-religious existential sphere during the times 800 A.D. and 1200 A.D. A reference to the Charyāpadas as the oldest prototype of the Bengali language, a factor which has been regarded as the prime element in identity formation, clearly points to the probabilities of finding the breeding ground of this cultural efflorescence of Bengal as a region within the social and intellectual genre of these padas. The Charyāpadas have two sides to them. the philosophical and spiritual, as Sashibhusan Dasgupta points out<sup>43</sup>. Among the two philosophical traditions of the later Buddhism, the Mādhyamika tradition of Nāgārjuna has influenced the composers of the charyās contained in the *Charyācharyavinīśchaya*. There is a strong current of idealism in these compositions. According to the Tāntric Mahāyāna theory of existence, the life is like a river on the two banks of which are nonexistence and spiritual grace. Both these have to be assimilated to attain Bodhi or Nirvāṇa. The Sahajiya cult was bred within the sect of Vajrayāna. This cult renders both the contemplation as well as the object of contemplation or Nirvāṇa as essentially pure and unique, Sahaja. Every creature and thing has an essential component, which forms the core of its identity, which remains unchanged through all the processes of dynamism. One had to attain the truth of this essentiality in an unadulterated schema of joy. This realization and the joy it evokes are the main themes of the Sahajiya cult, expressed in the charyās.

There are in total four texts that have been discovered, which contain the dohās., viz. 1. *Charyācharyavinīśchaya* with Sanskrit



annotations, 2. Saroj Vajra's *Dohākośa*, 4. Kṛṣṇāchārya's *Dohākośa*, with Sanskrit notes and 5. *Ḍākārṇava* with Sanskrit compositions included.

Suniti Kumar Chatterji refers to the esoteric and yogic characteristic of the charyāpadas and places agree the date of charyā between 950 and 1200 A.D.<sup>44</sup>. Among the Siddha poets of the Charyās, the most important are Lui-Pā (2 poems), Kāñha-Pā (12 poems), Saraha-pāda (4 poems), Bhusuku-pāda (8 poems)<sup>45</sup>. Among them Kāñha-Pāda has been identified with Paṇḍitāchārya Śrī-Kāñha-Pāda, the author of *Hevajra-pañjikā-yoga-ratna-mālā*, a manuscript dated to the 39th regnal year of King Govindapāla the last Pāla rājā of Magadha. This may be dated around 1199 or 1200 A.D.<sup>46</sup>.

Apart from these dohās there is the text of *Ḍākārṇava*, which contains a number of songs composed in the vernacular. Haraprasad Sastri refers to the *Varṇaratnākara* Ms in the Asiatic society of Bengal composed by Kaviśekharāchārya, Jyotirīśvara the court-poet of King Harisimhadeva of Mithilā, between 1300-1321. It is a transcription from the main Ms composed in Bengal Year 388 A.D., about a thousand years from the present. This Ms mentioned 76 of the 84 siddhas. Going by this evidence, Sastri concluded that there was a tremendous efflorescence of Bengali literature prior to the Islamic invasion. The perusal of the history of several of the siddhas and charyākāras links up the regions of Nepal and Tibet with Bengali tradition. According to Chatterji<sup>47</sup> the *charyās* cannot be described as literature proper. Their appeal and intention are primarily religious. They lack literary beauty in the true sense of the word. Their importance is primarily linguistic and doctrinal. Yet here and there we find couplets which breathe true poetry, in spite of the atmosphere not being particularly poetical, several metres are used, and the poems are true lyrics which were meant to be, and undoubtedly were sung. The Ms gives the names of rāgas to which they were sung. The metres are all mātrā-vṛtta or moric metres of apabhraṁśa and New Indo-Aryan, the commonest being the pādakulaka. The medieval Bengali Assamese and Oriya metre payāra, i.e. pādakāra or lāchāḍi, rathay etc. which is found in Bhojpuriya, and originated from Pādakulaka.

#### **BENGAL SOCIETY AND THE BIRTH OF A NEW GENRE: THE EVIDENCE OF THE DOHĀS**

After this discussion of the general nature of the charyās let us look

into the historical and social aspects of this literature. Sasibhushan Dasgupta<sup>48</sup> and Niharranjan Ray<sup>49</sup> both have related the *charyapādas* in order to trace the subaltern culture of ancient Bengal. Many of the *dohās* describe the commoners' life style, their food, dress, entertainment mode, even social and philosophical leanings. R.C. Majumdar states that the early *charyapādas* refer to *ḍoma*, *chaṇḍāla* and *śavara*, their primitive practices, rites, social behaviour. Kāñhu-pāda writes :

“nagarabaahiri re dombi tohori kudiya.  
 Choyi Choyi jaaha so baamhonadiya..  
 Alo dombi toe sama koribo na saango.  
 Nighin kanho kaapaali joyi laango..  
 Ek so poduma chousotthi paakhudi.  
 Tohin chodi naachoa dombi Baapudi..  
 Ha lo dombi to puchomi sadbhabe.  
 Aaisshoshi jaashi dombi kahori naaben..  
 Taanti bikanoa dombi abaranaa chaangeda  
 Tohor antare chhaadi nadapedaa..  
 Tu lo dombi haanu kapaalii.  
 Tohor antare moe ghenili haader maalii..  
 Sarabar bhanjia dombi khao molaan  
 Maarami dombi lemi paraan..”

This passage describes in the literal sense a female of the *dom* caste who lived outside the settlement. She is said to regularly take the ferry selling coarse fabric and reed-baskets. Kāñho opens up to this fair *dom* lady and offers her a necklace of bones. There is a greater esoteric meaning to this *pāda*, which relates to the secret *sahajiya* rites and idealistic discourse. But such paragraphs reveal a close connection with the common, low caste, even outcastes of Bengal. Majumdar relates<sup>50</sup> the *chaṇḍālas*, *dom* and *śavaras* described in the *charyās* “occupy the lowest stratum of the society. The *Śavaras* are frequently referred to in literature associated with Bengal, and probably figure in Pāhārpur sculptures. Their primitive and even indecent practices influenced the higher classes.....” “The *Ḍomas* lived outside the town and were regarded as untouchable. They built baskets and looms(*tānt*). The *Ḍoma* women were of loose character and moved about singing and dancing. The *Śavaras* lived in hills. Their women folk wore ear-rings and decorated themselves with peacock tail, and garlands of *guñjā*



seeds." R C. Majumdar relies on the *charyās* to draw this evidence. Truly, the *charyās* seem to represent this so-called decadent genre with great liveliness and divine ecstasy. This genre reveals the true authors of the Bengali language.

Let us also see how the mainstream Sanskritic paradigm was connected and influenced by this substantially present "other" identity, to take the idiom of Derrida, the post-structuralist philosopher, situating identities in a binary of existence. R.C. Majumdar's comment on the "lowly" tribes and untouchables bear relation to the early 20th century nationalist spirit, when Bengal, a late entrant, into the Sanskritic frame in early medieval times was nevertheless being projected as traditional centre of Sanskritic intellectual exercise and hence a candidate for early 20th century nationalist search for tradition. Historians were trying to establish its foothold on the pattern of Vedic-Sanskritic revivalism. However, the class and caste barriers did exist in the early medieval times. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* and the *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* first diverged from the trodden path of Brahmanical discipline in prescribing a meat and fish diet for the Bengali Brāhmaṇas<sup>51</sup>. These texts (not later than 13th-14th centuries) along with Bhāvadeva Bhaṭṭa's (11th century A.D.) *Chhāndogya Karmānuṣṭhāna Paddhati*, *Prāyaścitta Prakaraṇa*, *Vyāvahāra Tilaka*, quoted by Raghunandana in the 12-13th centuries, and *Daśakarma Dīpikā* or *Saṁskāra Paddhati*, were all trying to assimilate and compromise the plural cultural and social threads by enlarging the Vedic-Puranic codes. These Dharmaśāstra works structure the Bengali society into two sections: one the Brāhmaṇas, the other comprises all the non-Brāhmaṇas, termed Śūdra. There was evidently no discernible Kṣatriya caste. The second class, as is obvious comprised by far the majority and was a plural category. The stratifications made within this section in a hierarchical order further illustrates the eager attempt made by the Brahmanical codifiers to adopt and adapt the indigenous populace, keeping in mind the economic and social stratification already in vogue. The non-Brāhmaṇas are divided into three subcastes, or vaṃsa-saṅkaras, indicating the mixed character of these castes. A perusal of these subcastes reveals the interesting fact that caste divisions referred to professions and livelihoods. The Uttama or highest Saṅkara comprised of such castes as Karaṇas or scribes, Ugras or those who practised military arts, Tantravāya or weaver, Gandhavaṇika or dealers in perfumery, Nāpita or barber,

Gopa or cowherd, Karmakāra or smith, Taulika or oildealer, Kumbhakāra or potter, etc. The Madhyama or medium category was constituted of the Taksan or carpenter, Rajaka or washerman, Svarṇakāra or goldsmith, Naṭa or dancer, Śavara or archer-hunter, Śauṇḍika or vintner etc. These terms literally denoted those occupations and it is therefore clear that practically no stylistic rendition is added on by the Dharmasāstrakāras in making the nomenclature. The Adhama Saṅkara consisted of the lowest castes like the Malegrahi or Malo, Chaṇḍāla or tanners, Varuda, or baori, Malla or another branch of Māl caste etc. In the last category, in fact, we note an inclusion of the tribal component of the populace who had remained outside the Sanskritization process and therefore could not assume the relatively higher status of the professional castes nor adopt occupation-based nomenclature.

It is with this last category that the writers of the *Charyās* express their association quite often. This probably does not only indicate the popularity of the sahajiya tradition among these common folks but has a greater social significance. This significance may be assumed to have connection with some of the pādas composed by Saroruha-pāda. One of the compositions question the origin of caste division. It goes like this. Brāhmaṇa is said to be born of the mouth of the Brahma. But that was a past tradition. Now the Brāhmaṇas take birth in a way common to all humans. How, therefore do we justify the higher status of the Brāhmaṇas. If it is argued that a Brāhmaṇa is a Brāhmaṇa by virtue of his culture and behaviour or knowledge then give the Chaṇḍālas a chance to achieve the same knowledge and culture. If by reading the Vedas a Brāhmaṇa is created, let the Chaṇḍāla read the Vedas. In fact Saroruhapāda comments, "the low castes do so while reading the grammar. Grammar texts contain a lot of portions from the Vedas. And if by performing sacrifices Brāhmaṇas achieve a higher status let them do so. Adding ghee to the fire only creates a lot of fume and smoke, which is irritating to the eye." In fact he goes on to say, Veda does not embody the essential meaning of existence, Vedas only repeat a lot of meaningless words<sup>52</sup>. In the same strain, Saroruha also criticises the different sectarian religions as bogus and highlighted the Sahajiya superiority in preaching the essence of life, death, existence and the utter elemental sameness of all.

Reverting to the question of identity of both the *Charyāpadas*

as well as the region in general, an extremely interesting environ is created in the dohās of Bhusuku which relates to the origin of the conscious Bengali identity :

“baajo naao padmaar khaale paari dilo  
nirdoy dangaale desh luti nilo!  
Ajike Bhushuku tui Bangali Bhaili  
niyo gharaṇī Chandali leli.”

Thus Bhusuku claims his Bengali identity and records an important social problem, that of piracy on the riverine tracts of eastern Bengal. Rajat Kanta Ray, in his recent article<sup>53</sup> discerns a difference in the identity of this Bargaali or Gaudī and the post-Islamic-Bengal Bengali. This typification is based on the mentality structure that Ray has arbitrarily accepted as the “Bengali” articulation. He also raises the issue of Joydev’s identity as either Oriya or Bengali, and holds the Joydev genre of poetics and emotionalism as different from the post-Islamic, post-Sufi expressions of syncretism and social rendition. One thing, however, becomes clear from his article that Ray could not escape noting the continuing, flowing river of social and philosophical expression that takes a discursive pattern through Joydev’s Vaiṣṇavite tradition, the Buddhist Doha philosophy and the Sufi syncretism. One could thus note a peculiar Bengali idiom of poetics and social reading from the 11th century onwards, which would reach a peak during Chaitanya’s times. This trend of modifying the Sanskritic norms could only take place in a region that had its own socio-economic and cultural paradigms in the process of formulation before the Sanskritic penetration. As a result, even though there was a rapid and eager adoption of the Sanskritic pattern, it never subsumed the local, indigenous paradigm. The assimilation of the different threads of culture coexisting in the region led to a flowering of a third ‘other’, which however, remained within the greater and modified Sanskritic framework, yet expressed itself in a distinct voice. Thus a subaltern version assumed a significant part of cultural paradigm of Bengal, a Bengal whose cultural geography was not limited by landmarks. In my recent research framework I am trying to discern the cognitive patterns of past societies, especially focusing on the folk paradigm within the expressive genre. The evolution of a vernacular in a region is a chief indicator of that cognitive pattern. The case of Bengali in its formative period is especially interesting because it shared traits with other adjacent regional languages, since their

inception. Common ethnographic and historical roots mark this complex of linguistic breeding ground, as we have seen above. The linguistic medium adopted by the dohākāras is probably not accidental but refers to the germination of an identity, in the cooking of which several ingredients were absorbed and a new phenomenon is prepared.

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## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON INDO-GREEK DIE-ENGRAVING

Osmund Bopearachchi\*

Two bronze coins struck in the name of Lysias characterised by engraving mistakes came to my notice a few months back. These coins enable us to understand that the legend was engraved after the execution of the monetary type which consume more energy, time and technical skills.

### 1. LYSIAS. AE. INDIAN-STANDARD.

Circular flan. Medium weight 8.50 g (Pl. 1).

Obv. Bust of Heracles to r., club and palm over l, shoulder.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΙΚΗΤΟΥ instead of usual  
ΛΥΣΙΟΥ, Υ ΟΙ Ζ ΥΛ

Rev. Elephant walking to r. *Maharajasa apadihatasa / Lisiasa.*

21 mm, 4.8 g. To l., Π (BN, series 9. B).

When this coin is placed in front of a mirror the usual legend ΛΥΣΙΟΥ appears as it should be on the coin. It is also noteworthy that on coins of Lysias with the monograms ΑΣ, Κ & Κ, the Kharoshthi legend is written *Lisikasa*, while with Π & Ρ it is *Lisiasa*, but on this coin, the name of the king is written as ΠΙΡΗ : *Lisiusa*. It may be an engraving error, because on the same coin, the Kharoshthi 'a' of *apadihatasa* is written as 'u': 𑀅. Another coin in the British Museum (inv. no. 1956.7.10.35 ex-H.L. Haughton collection) is struck with the same obverse and reverse dies.<sup>1</sup> Mitchiner does not pay attention to these details. The present coin is no doubt the most well preserved specimen of the series.<sup>2</sup>

Following is the second specimen of the same series struck in the name of the same Indo-Greek king characterised by a different engraving error.


### LYSIAS. AE. INDIAN-STANDARD.

Circular flan. (Pl. 2).

Obv. Bust of Heracles to r., wearing wreath, club and palm over l, shoulder. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΗΤΟΥ/ΙΚΛΥΣΙΟΥ.

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\* (C. N. R. S. Paris)

**Rev.** Elephant walking to r. *Maharajasa apadihatasa/Lisiasa*.  
22.9 mm, 5.20 g. Below :  (BN, series 9. B). (see the  
line drawing by François Ory, fig.1)

Apart from the right stroke of the monogram which takes the form of an elongated 'S' instead of usual concave line, the reverse does not have any anomalies. It is the obverse that interests us more. Instead of the usual legend in Greek : ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΙΚΗΤΟΥ / ΑΥΣΙΟΥ, appears : ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΗΤΟΥ / ΙΚΛΥΣΙΟΥ. While engraving the legend the engraver has left out mistakenly two letters : 'IK' of ΑΝΙΚΗΤΟΥ. Realising the error, he had then caught it up by introducing the two missing letters at the beginning of the king's name in Greek creating a confusion.

This coin is one of the many specimens of the second Mir Zakah deposit which reached the Peshawar bazaars. The yellowish-reddish patina of this specimen is one of the main characteristics of the bronze coins from the two Mir Zakah deposits.<sup>3</sup>

This coin enables us understand the different stages of die-engraving. It seems that first the type and then the legend were engraved. Concerning the legend, first the title 'ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ' is engraved. It starts at 7 o' clock, instead of usual 9 o' clock and ends up at 10 o' clock. The epithet begins at 11 o' clock. The engraver realised his mistake only when the epithet ends up at 2 o' clock. If the epithet was correctly engraved it would have reached the usual 4 o' clock position. In order to fill the large gap between 2 o' clock and 7 o' clock which represents more than one third of the total space, the engraver added the two missing letters : IK of ΑΝΙΚΗΤΟΥ at 6 o' clock. The name of the king, instead of the usual 8 o' clock to 5 o' clock anti-clockwise disposition, begins at 5 o' clock. To our knowledge, this is the first known example of the Indo-Greek coinages where a die-engraving error of the legend was subsequently corrected.

When studying the Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian coins of the Bara hoard, I have made several observations concerning the die-engraving. On close examination, it became evident that in many cases first the monetary type was engraved and then the legend. For example, on coin no. 90, first the king on horseback and then the legend were engraved, and this is the reason why the 'E' of ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ appears over the whip held by the king (see fig 2).<sup>4</sup> The conclusion to be drawn from these observations is that first the type and then the legend was engraved.

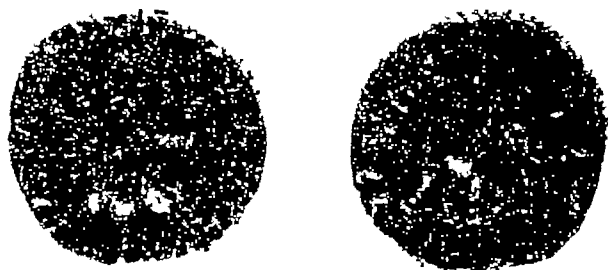


Reference :

1. See M. Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 9 Vol., London, 1975-1976, series 267, 2nd illustration from the left
2. This coin was published by us, see O. Bopearachchi, 'Some interesting coins from the Pandayale hoard', *News Letter, Oriental Numismatic Society*, no. 169, Autumn 2001, p. 19-21, no. 3.
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4. See the forthcoming publication, O. Bopearachchi, *An Indo Greek and Indo-Scythian Coin Hoard from Bara (Pakistan)*, Seattle 2002, no. 90



1



2



Fig 1



Fig 2

## NOTE ON A STONE INSCRIPTION IN THE PATNA MUSEUM

Samaresh Bandyopadhyay

A stone inscription preserved in the Patna Museum was published by the great epigraphist D. C. Sircar in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 1984, pp. 117-120. The language of the inscription, dated in the year 16 (i.e. 94 A.D.) of the Kaṇiṣka era, is Sanskrit "greatly influenced by Prakrit as is the case with many inscriptions of the Kuṣāṇa period". It has 3 lines and we are concerned here with that portion of the second line which has been read as "*Bhagavato[dvata]ṇiṇya[puruṣasya]pratimē pratiṣṭhāpitā*", Sanskritised as "*bhagavataḥ adviṇiṇya-puruṣasya pratimā pratiṣṭhāpitā*" and translated as "an image of the lord 'the person having no second (i.e. the Buddha)' ..... is installed."

It has also been stated by Sircar that "the image mentioned in the inscription under discussion is said to have been of the lord called Advitiyapuruṣa (literally, one having no second), apparently indicating the Buddha". The description of the Buddha as a "person-having-no second" i.e. "unique personality" is of absorbing interest and in this connection equally interesting it is to make a reference to the expression *appaṭi-puggala*, the credit of drawing attention for the first time to which goes to the distinguished scholar in Pali, B. M. Barua, who, referring to the *Dīghanikāya* mentioning the expression *loke appaṭi-puggala* and quoting the *Majjhimanikāya* passage *Santassa bhūripaṇṇassa mahāpaṇṇassa, vīṭalobhassa tathāgatassa sugatassa appaṭipuggalassa vīṭalobhassa visāradassa nipuṇassa Bhagavato tassa sāvako'hamasmi*, observed<sup>1</sup> that the Buddha is extolled in the Pali Nikāyas as *appaṭi-puggala*, a person "without a compeer", a-sama, "one who is unrivalled" and *anopama* "one who is incomparable", all being synonymous of *advīṇiṇya-puruṣa*.

In an article published as a centenary tribute to B. M. Barua, attention has been drawn by us<sup>2</sup> to the occurrence of the expression in certain other Nikāyas like the *Saṃyuttanikāya*, which not only quotes the above mentioned *Dīghanikāya* passage mentioning the expression *appaṭi-puggala*, but also mentions it in another passage and the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, which has quoted the *Saṃyuttanikāya* passage mentioning the expression, besides having another passage mentioning it. It has also been possible for us<sup>3</sup> to trace the expression in the *Therīgāthā*, *Apadāna* and the *Cullavaddesa* of the

*Khuddakanikāya*, in the *Jātakanidānakathā* and also in non-canonical Pali texts like the *Milindapañho*,<sup>4</sup> *Sāmantapāsādikā*,<sup>5</sup> *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*,<sup>6</sup> *Visuddhimagga*<sup>7</sup> and the *Buddhavaṃsaṭṭhakathā*.<sup>8</sup> Certain Buddhist Sanskrit works like the *Avadānaśatakaḥ*,<sup>9</sup> *Divyāvadāna*,<sup>10</sup> *Mahāvastu*<sup>11</sup> and the *Mahāvuyutpatti*<sup>12</sup> mention it as *apratipudgala* and the *Lalitavistara*<sup>13</sup> as *apraṭi-puṅgala*.

It is thus apparent that the description of the Buddha as *advīṭya-puruṣa* of the Patna Museum inscription of the year 16 of the Kaṇiṣka era has very good corroboration in the mention of the expression *appaṭi-puggala*, *apraṭi-pudgala* or *apraṭi-puṅgala* in a large number of literary texts.

What is exceedingly interesting in this connection is that the description of the Buddha as "without a compeer", "unrivalled", "incomparable", "having-no-second" or "a unique personality" seems to get further support from a coin of Kaṇiṣka I. In his monumental work *The Coins of the Greek and Scythian Kings of Bactria and India in the British Museum*,<sup>14</sup> the coin was published by P. Gardner more than sixty years before Barua or Sircar had occasion to deal with the expression *appaṭi-puggala* or *advīṭya-puruṣa*. The coin has been described as follows :

Size — 1.05"; Metal — Copper.

**Obverse :** King standing to left by an altar; holds in left hand spear; right hand extended over altar; barbarous inscription PAO KANHPKI.

**Reverse :** Buddha, standing facing, nimbate; his right hand raised as in teaching; in the left, wallet; to left monogram; inscription in the right field from top to bottom OΔYOBBOY, in the left field from top to bottom CAKAMA.

The reverse legend OΔYOBBOY CAKAMA has been taken by Gardner<sup>15</sup> as a transcript of *Advaya Buddha Śākyamuni* and, as has been recorded by him, "the word *advaya* is due to a suggestion of Mr. Bendall". But, as we have pointed out elsewhere,<sup>16</sup> if OΔYOBBOY is a transcript for *Advaya* and CAKAMA for *Śākyamuni*, then the transcript of the legend should be *Advaya Śākyamuni*, and not *Advaya Buddha Śākyamuni*, as Gardner suggested.

As for the meaning of the word *Advaya*, it is stated<sup>17</sup> that the full form would be *advaya-vādin*, "he who speaks of the one [knowledge]". If this interpretation of the legend is taken to be correct, then the meaning of the legend OΔYOBBOY CAKAMA will be

"the Śākya sage who speaks of the one [knowledge]". But, as it has been attempted by us to show elsewhere,<sup>18</sup> since the word *advaya* literally means "not two", "only," "without a second" or "unique,"<sup>19</sup> the legend may better be interpreted as "the unique Śākya sage". However, it should be noted here that Advaya being another name of the Buddha according to the lexicons including the *Amarakoṣa*,<sup>20</sup> the legend may perhaps also be taken to mean "Advaya (i.e. the Buddha), the Śākya sage" whose representation is also found along with the legend on the coin as we have already seen.

The increasing popularity of the description of the Buddha as "a unique personality" in different forms like the *appaṭi-puggala*, *apraṭi-pudgala* or *apraṭi-puṅgala* of the literary texts, *advītiya-puruṣa* of the Kuṣāṇa inscription and *ΟΔΥΟΒΟΥ ΣΑΚΑΜΑ* i.e. *advaya-Śākyamuni* of the Kuṣāṇa coin, all referred to above, might have led to the origin of the name Advaya for the Buddha.

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4. *The Mllindapaṇḥo (being dialogues between king Milinda and the Buddhist sage Nāgasena) The Pālī Text*, edited by V. Trenckner, The Royal Asiatic Society, London, p. 239, line 12 (*Buddhoti appaṭipuggala Buddhō ti yaṃ vacanaṃtaṃ*).
5. *Samantapāsādikā* (Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the *Vinaya Pīṭaka*), Vol. I, edited by J. Takakusu and M. Nagai, Pali Text-Society, London, First Published 1924, Reprinted 1975, p. 120, line 10 (*appaṭibhāgo appaṭipuggalo....*). This passage quoting the expression also occurs in the *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa, as will be seen below.
6. *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* (the Commentary on the *Dhammapada*), Vol. III, edited by H. C. Norman, Pali Text Society, First Published 1906, Reprinted 1970, p. 114, line 7 (*apaṭipuggalo'ti paṣīdanti....*).
7. Edited by C. A. F. Rhys Davids, Reprinted in one Volume, 1975, p. 207, line 16. As noted above, the same passage also occurs in the *Samantapāsādikā*.
8. "Siddhatthassa aparena asamo appaṭipuggalo anantasilo amitayaso Tisso lokagganāyako" (XVIII. 1). cf.

*Madhuratthavilāsini Nāma Buddhavaṃsaṭṭhakathā* of Bhaddan-tācariya Buddhadatta Mahāthera, edited by I. B. Horner, Published for the Pali Text Society, by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1945, p. 228. As noted above, the passage is also found mentioned in the *Jātakanidānakathā*.

9. *Evamvidho yatra śāstra lokeṣva-pratipudgalaḥ/  
Tathāgato-balaprāptaḥ cakṣuṣmān pannaṃvṛttaḥ//*  
(*Avadanaśatakam*, edited by S.S. Speyer, St. Petersburg, 1906-09, Vol. II, p. 199, lines 1-2). *Aprati-pudgalaḥ* has also been read as *apratī-puṅgalaḥ* in which form, as it will be seen below, the expression occurs in the *Lalitavistara*.
10. Edited by E. B. Cowell and R. A. Neil, Cambridge, 1886, p. 393, line 13 (*idam amṛtam udāram agryabodhimhyadhigatam apratipudgalena tena*).
11. Edited by Senart, Paris, 1882-1897, Vol. I, p. 219, Line 9 (*Yadarthaṇca ulloketidīśām apratīpudgalaḥ*). Cf. also Vol. II, p. 141 line 12 (*sādhū sādhū mahāsattva sādhū apratīpudgala*). In R.G. Basak's edition the two śloka are to found in Vol. I, Kolkata, 1963, p. 267, and Vol. II, Kolkata, 1965, p. 198 respectively.
12. 2nd Edition by Minorov, St. Petersburg, 1911, p. 1, line 8.
13. Edited by Herausgegeben Von Dr. S. Leffmann, Halle, 1902, p. 126, line 12 (*asamaśca viśiṣṭaśca lokeṣvapratīpuṅgalaḥ*) also p. 313 line 17 (*kartuṃ rūjāmapratīpuṅgalasya*) and p. 358 line 7 (*Udgatastvaṃ mahāprājño lokeṣvapratīpuṅgalaḥ*).
14. London, 1886, p. 133, 190 and Plate XXVI. 2 and XVII. 2 as mentioned in A. K. Coomaraswamy's *The Origin of the Buddha Image* (First Indian Edition, New Delhi, 1972), p. 38 and *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, Vol. III, Parts 1-2, 1970 p. 444, line 2. Cf. Our paper entitled 'Note on a British Museum Coin of Kaṇiṣka' in the *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XXXVIII, Part I, 1976, p. 123 and also our paper "The Reverse Legends on Some Coins of Kaṇiṣka I, in the *Journal Ancient Indian History*. Vol. XIV, Parts 1-2, 1984, p. 240.
15. *Op. cit.* p. lxvi.
16. *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XXXVII, Part I, 1976, p. 123; *Journal of Ancient Indian History*., Vol. XIV, Parts 1-2, 1984, pp. 240-241.
17. Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. lxvi, note.
18. *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XXXVIII, Part I, 1976, p. 124; *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, Vol. XIV, Parts 1-2, 1984, pp. 241-242.

A reference has been made by A.K. Coomaraswamy (Cf. Origin of the Buddha Image', *Art Bulletin*, 1926, Vol. XI, No. 4; reprinted in the *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, Vol. III, Parts 1-2, 1970, p. 431) to a copper coin of Kaṇṣka-I bearing on the obverse a seated figure of the Buddha and, according to him, the intended reading of the reverse legend is *Go [tama] Boydo*. D.C. Sircar is of the opinion (*ibid.*, p. 431, note 66) that 'the reference is probably to the first part of the legend *Oduobou Sakamāna* i.e. Advaya-Sākyamuni'. But since the coin with the legend OAYOBOY CAKAMA has the standing figure of the Buddha and not seated, as noted above, the view of Sircar does not seem correct. Moreover, it has escaped the notice of Sircar that Coomaraswamy himself has also noticed (cf. *ibid.*, p. 444) the coin depicting the standing figure of the Buddha in the same article.

On the basis of a few newly noticed coins of the same variety on which Coomaraswamy likes us to read *Go [tama] Boydo*, B. N. Mukherjee, however, reads (*Asiatic Society Monthly Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 11, December, 1981, p. 6; see also *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Vol. XXXIII, Nos. 3-4, 1981, issued in August, 1983, for the Communication entitled 'The Reverse Legend on a Variety of Kuṣāṇa Coins', pp. 110-111) (*S*) (*r*) (?) *Go Boudo* and, according to him, "*Srgo* or *Sogo* obviously alludes to Sākya tribe and the legend *Sogo Bodo* or *Ṣ (r) (a\*) go Boudo* distinguishes the seated figure as representing the Sākya sage Gautama Buddha".

The letter *go* may no doubt stand for Gotama, as Coomaraswamy wants us to take, but, as has been pointed out by us (*Journal of Ancient Indian History*, Vol. XIV, Parts 1-2, 1983-84, pp. 239-240), on the coin under discussion there is hardly any space after *Go* and before *B* to accommodate any letter after *Go* and if *Go* is really intended for *Gotama*, it is difficult to explain why the name is not mentioned in its full form and *tama* is dropped in the legend. In the circumstances, if the legend, *Go Boudo*, read originally on the coin by Gardner (*op. cit.*, p. 175 and Plate XXXII. 14) is taken as it is and if the reading of *Sr* or *So* before *Go* of Mukherjee on the basis of a few newly noticed coins mentioned above is correct then *Srgo* or *Sogo Boudo* may be taken to stand for Sākya Buddha, whose seated figure with legs crossed and arms in posture of benediction is depicted on the reverse of the coin.

19. Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Indian Institute, Oxford, 1899, p. 19. According to Monier-Williams, Advaya is also the name of a Buddha. He has, however, not cited any source in support of his statement.
20. *Advayaḥ Buddhaḥ Ityamaraḥ* as noticed in a Bengali edition of the *Śabdakalpādrumāḥ*.

## **A UNIQUE BRASS MEDALLION [COIN?] OF MANIPUR - ITS SOCIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

P.K. Bhattacharyya

Though some scholars<sup>1</sup> do not believe in the existence of any coins of Manipur other than those issued in silver, gold and bell-metal, we have come across a unique piece of medallion (coin ?) in the coin-cabinet of the Manipuri State Museum, Imphal.

The description of the medallion is as follows :

Metal	:	Brass;
Shape	:	Circular;
Size	:	2.80 cm × 2.80 cm;
Weight	:	14.989 gms;
Provenance	:	Unknown.

The coin bears a single letter legend *ra* (𑜋) in Meithei on the obverse, like most other bell-metal coins of Manipur, while the reverse is plain.

Before we proceed to discuss the present coin, it is desirable to take notice of the history and numismatic tradition of the people of Manipur.

'The country inhabited by the Muneepoorees is, by the Burmahs called Kathe, which term they equally apply to the people; by the inhabitants of Cachar it is named Moglie; by those of Assam, Meklee and by the Shans or those who inhabit the country east of the Ningthee or Khyendwen river it is known as Cassay, of which term the Burmese word Kathe is a corruption.'<sup>2</sup> The State of Manipur, lying to the east of Bangladesh and Assam, between 23°50' and 25°41' N and 93°2' and 94°47' E., within an area of 8456 Sq.m., had a long independent existence. Though the records of Manipur contain list of rulers which may go back to the first century of the Christian era, the sober history of the country seems to have started with the accession of Pamheiba (*alias*, Gharib Niwaz) in 1714 A.D.<sup>3</sup>

Pamheiba according to some was a Naga<sup>4</sup>, or brought up by a Naga chief.<sup>5</sup> He adopted Hinduism and caused his people to accept the religion. But what is more important about Pamheiba is not his lineage, but the fact that he understood that the consolidation of the kingdom required an alliance of Meithei and Naga ruling elites and

an ideology which provided wider social norms beyond the boundary of the kingdom.

Like her history, the history of coinage of Manipur can, however, be traced from an earlier period.<sup>6</sup> The usual currency of Manipur was small pieces (16 gms) of bell metal coins. These are known as *Sel makhai* meaning half *Sel*. 'The metal is obtained chiefly from Burma, and consists of gongs, etc. Some of it is also procured from the British provinces.'<sup>7</sup> The process of minting coins is very primitive.<sup>8</sup> It appears to have consisted in the metal being first cast in little pellets, which were then softened by fire. The pellets were next flattened by a blow of the hammer into an irregularly rounded figure, and stamped by a punch with a letter cut on it. This is generally taken to be the initial letter of the reigning king's name or simply *Śrī*.

In addition to the bell-metal coins the rulers of Manipur appear to have minted coins also in silver and gold.<sup>9</sup> It is believed that the affluence of the country is witnessed following the successful raids into Burma and surrounding territories by Pamheiba (i.e. Garibnawaz) and it is not thus without reasons that Garibnawaz and his successors began minting coins in precious metals. But although brass was used for making utensils and images, its use for making coins, perhaps was unknown to the earlier rulers of Manipur.<sup>10</sup>

It is interesting to note in this connection the observation of Hudson<sup>11</sup> who noticed that 'while in England the direction in which the face of the sovereign looks, undergoes change with each reign, in Manipur they changed the shape of the coin entirely'. Thus the *cheitharol Kumbaba*,<sup>12</sup> the Chronicle of the kings of Manipur, mentions the system of introducing the new coin types at the time of accession of the Mahārājā Chandrakīrtti Sirīha in the following words :

*Maharaja maton ylbung-nona*  
*Śārambā Śel-bu plk-yl hai-dunā*  
*Śel Chāonā Śāduna mapā ibung*  
*ñō mayang-ñim-nā Śārambā Śel*  
*adugā Seljāo adugā yān-nā*  
*chāt-halle / nohg mai 4 rak Kaptunā*  
*Sāmu tohgduñā pāo Chelle /*

i.e. in view of small size of his father's coins, (Mahārājā Chandrakīrtti) on ascending the throne struck bigger coins and



ordered that both types of coins would be accepted as legal tenders. This piece of information was made public from elephant's back after four gun-salutes.

The Chronicle further mentions the following :

*13 ni thamj-dā Śengī Vathoktunā*  
*pithrañā Śen Śādunā asibu*  
*Yengdunā Chatnau hai-danā*  
*Kaithendā pithok-e*<sup>13</sup>

i.e. On account of some confusion regarding the actual legal currency on one Saturday (the 13th day of the lunar month), the king caused the coins made of brass and made it known to the people by showing a few such specimens of coins to the people of the bazar.

The *Sel* or *Sel-makhai* coins were generally prepared by a class of workers known as *Senjam*. The normal rate of exchange of *Sels* or *Sel-makhai* to an Indian Rupee varies from 450 to 500.<sup>14</sup> It is said that Mr. Johnstone<sup>15</sup> attempted to induce the king Chandrakīrtti to issue *Sel* so that the usual ratio was established. It is not unlikely that this led to the striking of bigger types of coins in the reign of king Chandrakīrtti as noticed above.

The present medallion (or coin?) also appears to have been struck during the reign of king Chandrakīrtti Siṃha, but it looks more like a medallion than the usual *Sel* or *Sel-makhai* because of its unusual size and weight. It is possible that the king might have issued this medallion in commemoration of a significant event during his reign.

The rulers of Manipur accepted Chaitanya Vaishnavism in the middle of the eighteenth century. King Chandrakīrtti Siṃha was also a devout Vaishṇava. It is said that a Saintly preacher from Śrī-haṭṭa (i.e. Sylhet) named Rāmagati Vidyālaṅkāra visited Manipur during king Chandrakīrtti's reign. The Mahārāja was greatly impressed with the divine nature of Vidyālaṅkāra and according to a tradition as recorded by Achyuta Tattvanidhi,<sup>16</sup> he sent along with Vidyānidhi a brass bell weighing two maunds for *Śrī-mandira*, the ancestral house of Lord Gaurāṅga, as a token of his regard for Lord Gaurāṅga. The present medallion made of brass was also probably issued by the Mahārāja as the mark of respect of the august visit of the Saintly person Rāmagati Vidyālaṅkāra in the kingdom of Manipur. The letter *ra* in Meithei script on the medallion stands for the first letter of the name Rāmagati.

The significance of writing the letter *ra* in Meithei script cannot, however, be overlooked. It has rightly been suggested that in the domain of literature of Manipur the period from 1750 to 1900 A.D. was 'Specially a period of Bengali influence'.<sup>17</sup> Manipuri was over shadowed by Bengali and Sanskrit as languages of religion and culture. The people of Manipur began to write songs in Bengali.<sup>18</sup> During this period they also adopted the Bengali script giving up their old and complicated alphabet.<sup>19</sup>

But there was a partial revival of the Manipuri (Meithei) language and literature during the reign of Mahārājā Chandrakīrti. The king is known to have introduced the practice of singing the national prayer in honour of Lord Govinda in Meithei language instead of in Bengali.<sup>20</sup> Hence, it is not unlikely that in some cases he also advocated the practice of writing also in Meithei script, and the legend of the present coin under discussion is an instance in point. This should be viewed as a reaction against the backdrop of policy of thorough Bengalisation as adopted by earlier rulers of Manipur. This may also be characterised as one of the earliest attempts of the king and the emerging elites to harness traditional resources of Culture for crystallisation of viable ethnic identity.

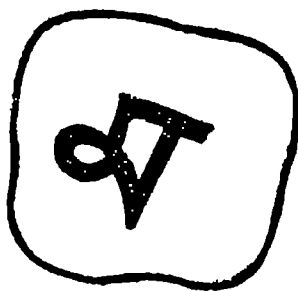
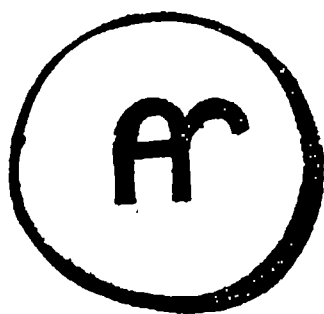
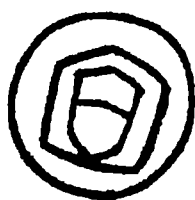
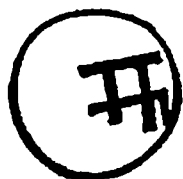
\*\* I am indebted to Padmasrī N. Khelchandra Singh of Imphal for helping me to translate the sources from Meithei literature.

#### Notes :

1. O.I. Singh, *Coins of Manipur*, Imphal, 1980.
2. R.B. Pemberton, *Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India*, Calcutta, 1835, p. 20.
3. According to Mutun Jhulon Singh, Gharib Niwaz ascended the throne in 1709 A.D. (cf. *Bijay Panchali*, ed. M. Jhulon Singh, p. 64).
4. Kabui Gangmmei, Some Problems of Writing the History of Manipur in Regional Integration, *A Quarterly Journal*, Vo. IX, no. 1.
5. G. Ray, *History of Manipur*, Calcutta, 1958, p. 30.
6. Mc. Culloch believes that the chief who first coined money was Khagemba (c. 1597 to 1652 A.D.), *An Account of the Valley of Manipore and the Hill Tribes with a Comparative Vocabulary of the Manipore with other languages*, 1859, pp. 37-38. According to some Pakhangba (c. 74-94 A.D.) was the first king of Manipur to issue a coinage of thin bell-metal pieces, S.K. Chatterji, *Kirāta-Jana-Kṛiti*, Calcutta, 1951, p. 82 and also P.K. Bhattacharyya, 'An Interesting Coin of Manipur' in *J.N.S.I.*, XXXIX, 182 ff.

- 7 R. Brown, *Statistical Account of the Native State of Manipur and the Hill Territory under its Rule*, Calcutta, 1873, p. 89.
8. *Loc. cit.*, See also A.W. Botham, *Catalogue of the Provincial Coin Cabinet*, Assam, 2nd ed., Allahabad, 1930, p. 548 ff.
9. For Silver coins see P.K. Bhattacharyya in *J.N.S.I.*, XXXVI, 144ff.; V. Chowdhury and P. Roy in *J.N.S.I.*, XXXVII. For gold coins see S.P. Basu in *J.N.S.I.*, XXVII, pp. 110-111; also cf. H.N. Chowdhury, *An Account of Cooch Behar and its Land Revenue Settlement*, 1903, pp. 231-2.
10. The workers in brass were known as *Konyoung*, See R. Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56. A brass image of Mahārāja Gharib Niwaz is preserved in the State Archives of Manipur, see Indian Historical Records Commission, 41st Session, Trivandrum, 1971, p. 39.
11. T.C. Hudson, *The Meitheis*, London, 1908, p. 38.
12. Cheltharol Kumbaba, ed. L. Yibum ñohal Singh and N. Khelchandra Singh, pp. 308-9.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 309.
14. T.C. Hudson, *op. cit.*, p. 38. It is possible as suggested by Richard Temple (*Indian Antiquary*, XXVII, pp. 169 ff) that the origin of the Scale of Value between the Sel and Rupee might be traced 'to the System of reckoning 400 Cowries to the Anna and to the identity of the Sel of Manipur with the dam of Akbar and of modern Nepal.'
15. T.C. Hudson, *loc. cit.*
16. Achyuta Charan Tattvanidhi, *Śrī-Haṭṭer Itivṛtta* (in Bengali), p. 44.
17. L. Iboongohal Singh, *Introduction to Manipore*, Imphal, 2nd ed., 1963, p. 72.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-3.
19. S.K. Chatterji, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
20. L. Iboongohal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

Line Drawings of some Bell Metal coins (circular) of Manipur.



Line Drawing of the Brass Medallion (Coin) of Manipur.

Line Drawing of a Square Bell Metal coin of Manipur.

## TWO EASTERN INDIAN IMAGES AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF UṢṢIṢAVIJAYĀ AND VAJRATĀRĀ

Thomas Eugene Donaldson \*

One of the more popular multi-armed formats for Buddhist goddesses depicts her with multiple (three or four) heads, eight arms and seated in a meditative pose with legs crossed in *vajraparyāṅka* (interlocked) or in *sattvaparyāṅka* (right leg resting on the left leg). Her principal left hand is held in front of her body in the threatening *tarjanī-mudrā* with or without a noose, while two of her other hands hold an arrow and a bow. The attributes in the other five hands vary but can be broken into two groups indicating two distinct goddesses who, though of a different iconological origin, have a similar iconographic format. In the first group the principal right hand holds a *viśuvavajra* in front of her chest, the lowered right hand displays *varada*, the uplifted right hand supports a small image of Buddha while the other left hands show *abhaya* and hold a vessel. This is the iconography for the three-faced Uṣṣiṣavijayā. In the second grouping the alignment of attributes is less standardized. The principal right hand is generally lifted in the act of throwing a *vajra*, the lowered hand holds a conch and the raised hand holds a noose while the remaining left hands hold a lotus (*utpala*) and a goad (*aṅkuśa*). This is the iconography for the four-faced (three visible) Vajratārā. Essentially then, Vajratārā wields the *vajra* in a threatening manner whereas Uṣṣiṣavijayā passively holds a *viśuvavajra*. In some cases, however, the principle right hand of Vajratārā is on her lap where it supports an upright standing *vajra* or it displays *varada* and the *vajra* is shifted to the uplifted back hand. On later images of Uṣṣiṣavijayā the principal left hand is lowered and merely holds a noose rather than displaying the aggressive *tarjanī-pāśa*. In that the disposition of their arms is quite similar, when important attributes are missing in sculptures (where color is absent) it is often difficult to distinguish between these two goddesses. The mutilated Vajratārā image from Bara in West Bengal, for example, had previously been identified as Mahā sarasvatī, Uṣṣiṣavijayā, and Mahāpratisarā.<sup>1</sup> Identification is particularly difficult in early images where the iconography has not as yet crystallized. It is not until the fourteenth century, in Nepal,

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Tibet and China, that *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* adopts the *dhyaṇamudrā* (with hand on lap) for the hand supporting the vessel, a feature that facilitates her identification. Images of these two goddesses make their initial appearance at about the same time with some of the earliest images appearing in eastern India, including two images of which this paper is particularly concerned—one from Ratnagiri identified as *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* (fig. 1) and one from Mukhalingam identified as *Vajratārā* (fig. 8). Both goddesses are exceptionally popular in Tantric Buddhism and both are worshipped for gross elements aimed at selfish gain as well as for noble ideas, thus appealing to a broad spectrum of the worshipping populace. Both also have a two-armed form with that of *Uṣṇīṣavijayā*, in fact, serving as a *dhāraṇī* goddess or as a directional goddess in the *maṇḍala* of *Vajratārā*.

### A. UṢṆĪṢAVIJAYĀ

Although her image is rare in India, the Buddhist goddess *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* (Victorious goddess of the *uṣṇīṣa*) is particularly popular in Nepal, in Tibet where she is named Tsugtor Namgyālma (gTsug-tor rNam-par-rgyal-ma), and in China where she is called *Viyajā* (Tsun-sheng fo-mu). She is one of the earliest feminine divinities and reciting her *dhāraṇī* was believed to destroy the effects of evil *karma*. The *dhāraṇīs*—short works mostly composed of meaningless syllables—are a “peculiar kind of Buddhist literature which is supposed to generate mystic power if repeated continually for a long time.” Accordingly;

The Buddhists believe that when the *Dhāraṇī* is repeated in deep meditation for a long time with concentration and faith, the mantra vibrations materialize themselves in the concrete form of a deity, which the worshipper visualizes, and thus obtains Siddhis or success. Once realized, the deity never leaves the worshipper and gives him everything that he desires.<sup>2</sup>

In the *Uṣṇīṣavijaya dhāraṇī sūtra*, translated into Chinese in *circa* CE 676, the Buddha teaches her *dhāraṇī* to the King of the heaven of the Thirty-three Gods to prevent his descent into hell. Śubhākarasimha and Amoghavajra each translated a manual about the *dhāraṇī* as a personified deity with various *mudrās* accompanying recitation. “They enumerate desires that can be gained by reciting this *dhāraṇī* and the number of times it should be recited. Certain rites accompany the recitation to obtain the fulfillment of desires.”<sup>3</sup> Amoghavajra presented a copy to Emperor

Tai-tsung in CE 762 on the latter's birthday and advised him to carry it with him (T52.829c18). In CE 776, Tai-tusng issued an edict ordering monks and nuns throughout the country to memorize the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī* within one month. Henceforth they were to recite it twenty-one times every day. At the beginning of each year they were to report to the Emperor on how many times they had recited it during the past year (T52.852c10). The recital for twenty-one times is assigned to Śubhākarasimha's manual for most purposes (T19.373b-375b).<sup>4</sup> A tenth century diagram of an altar supposedly prepared for the recitation of her *dhāraṇī* has survived at Dunhuang in Gansu province.<sup>5</sup>

In the *Dharmadhātuvāgīśvara-maṇḍala* of the *Niṣpannayogā valī* is a list of twelve goddesses called the Dhāraṇī-s, who collectively are placed in the family of the *tathāgata* Amoghasiddhi of green color. They are each two-armed and hold in the right hand the *viśvavajra* (double or crossed *vajra*) while their left hand holds their own special symbol. As the deified form of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī* she is white in color and her distinguishing attribute, held in her left hand, is a jar full of moonstones.<sup>6</sup> In the *maṇḍala* of Vajratārā, where she is also twoarmed, she is a directional goddess situated in the upper regions (zenith). According to different texts and *sādhana*s, she may be either white or yellow in color and have as her sire either Vairocana or Ratnasambhava. Whereas her left hand, as in the case of the other companion deities, may be in *tarjanī-mudrā*, her right hand holds either a *cakra* or a *vajra*.<sup>7</sup> These twoarmed forms are quite rare. In an example from the *Narthaṅg* pantheon her right hand holds a *viśvavajra* in front of her chest while the left hand, in *dhyāna*, holds a vessel.<sup>8</sup> As one of twentyone Tārās in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* pantheon she is seated with her right leg partially pendent. Her right hand is in *varada* while the left hand, at chest level, holds the stem of a lotus that supports an indistinct object.<sup>9</sup>

*Uṣṇīṣavijayā*, as an independent deity, is one of three deities in the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon associated with longevity, the others being Amitāyus and Sita-Tārā. Her image thus may appear as the central deity of an auspicious *maṇḍala* of long life, as in the luck-bringing psychogram promising long life, as in the luck-bringing psychogram promising longevity at the end of the Diamond-Rosary of *Maṇḍalas* at Ngor. In the religious interpretation, as noted by B.C. Olschak, "a longer life increases the opportunity to accumulate good deeds and thereby obtain a positive Karman (Phrin-las), enabling one to help more people."<sup>10</sup>

She may also appear as a secondary figure, as in *thankas* of "The Healing Buddha and His Celestial Assembly;" the "Sakyapa Lineage;" the "Three Maṇḍalas;" and in the "Sākyaśrī and the Lotsawa of Trophu" in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection.<sup>11</sup>

In Nepal the Bhīmaratha rite, which is indirectly associated with old age and death, is commemorated by the consecration of either a painting or sculpture containing a representation of a *stūpa* with the image of Uṣṇīṣavijayā.<sup>12</sup> The rite is still performed by Newari Buddhists when a person reaches the age of seventy-seven years, seven months, and seven days. It is a rite of passage, as noted by Pal, "from normalcy to senility, and after its performance the observer is considered no longer morally responsible for his actions. It is also a preparatory rite for death and ensures a safe passage to the Western Paradise of Amitābha Buddha".<sup>13</sup> Images of Uṣṇīṣavijayā housed in a *caitya* or *stūpa* were thus popular, a good example being a *paubha* (painting on cloth) dating to CE 1510-19 that depicts a "Myriad Caityas with Uṣṇīṣavijayā," the goddess being placed on the large *caitya* at the center. The occasion, as Pal suggests, was likely the observance of the rite known as *Lakṣacaitya*. The belief is that one's religious merit increases in proportion to the number of dedications made. The *Lakṣacaitya* rite earns the patron the merit of dedicating a hundred thousand *caityas* so that "by performing this rite the donor not only ensures a long life but also contributestoward his final freedom from the chain of rebirth."<sup>14</sup> Bronze commemorative *stūpas* are popular both Tibet<sup>15</sup> and Nepal.<sup>16</sup> They invariably enshrine the image of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, who is supplicated for immortality as well as long life.

Her role as the queen mother of enlightenment is emphasized by her name (Uṣṇīṣa) which is symbolic of the enlightenment elevation (*gTsug-tor*). She is also referred to as "The Spiritual Food of all Buddhas" or "The Great Mother of all Buddhas" (rGyal-ba Kungyi Yum) and the Buddha image that she supports with one of her right hands is her special symbol.<sup>17</sup> Three *sādhana*s (nos. 191, 211, 212) in the twelfth century *Sādhanamālā* describe her eightarmed form and in each case she is white, has three heads, resides in the womb of a *caitya* and bears the image of Vairocana on her crown. Accordingly, the worshipper should;

conceive himself as (Uṣṇīṣavijayā) who is white in complexion, three faced, three eyed, youthful and is decked in many ornaments. Her right and left faces are respectively of yellow and blue color. Her four right



hands display the *viśvavajra*, Buddha on lotus, the arrow and *varada* pose, and her four left hands hold the bow, the noose with the *tarjanī*, the *abhaya* pose and the well-filled water-vessel.<sup>18</sup>

In *sādhana* no. 211 we are additionally told that she is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* and that the Buddha seated on a lotus in one of her right hands is the *tathāgata* Amitābha.<sup>19</sup>

As recorded in the *rGyud sde kun btus*, (ed. Jam dbyangs blo gter dbang po) and summarized by Barbara Lipton, her description reads as follows :

She has a white body, three faces, and eight arms. Her center face is white like a white lotus, her right face is golden color, and her left face is sapphire blue. Her faces are slightly wrathful in appearance, but each face has three peaceful eyes. Her main right hand holds a double vajra, her upper right hand holds an image of Amitābha Buddha on white lotus, her second right hand holds an arrow and her lower right hand is palm up in the charity *mudrā*. Her main left hand is in the *mudrā* of fearlessness, her upper left hand is in the threatening *mudrā* holding a lasso, her second left hand holds a bow, and her lower left hand holds the longlife vase filled with nectar. She is very youthful and graceful. She wears many jeweled ornaments and silk robes. She sits cross-legged on a lotus. She is visualized by the practitioner with a white *Om* on her forehead, a red *Ah* on her throat, a blue *Hūm* on her heart (chest), and an image of Vairocana Buddha on her hair.<sup>20</sup>

According to Alice Getty the principal set of hands either holds a double thunderbolt (*viśvavajra*) at her breast or is in *dharmacakra mudrā*. The second set of hands may be in *dhyaṇa-mudrā* while holding the ambrosia vessel or the right hand displays *varada* and the left hand holds the vessel. The upper set of hands holds a small figure of Buddha, which may be supported by a lotus flower, and shows *abhaya*. the attributes of the fourth set of hands vary and may include the arrow and bow, a noose and *vajra*, or display *abhaya* and *tarjanī*. She is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* and her hair is piled in a high chignon (*uṣṇīṣa*) behind the crown. An effigy of Vairocana may decorate the crown.<sup>21</sup> Olschak interprets the noose, normally directed against the enemies of religion, as a symbolic weapon against the enemies of a healthy life, known as evil demons. The “water of life” in the vessel (*Tshe-Bum*) thus becomes

a “symbol for washing away all disease as a means to a healthy body, giving it the strength to fulfil good deeds for a better future life and the benefit of all.” The crossed thunderbolts (rDo-rje rGya-gram) symbolize diamond-hard, unshakeable firmness.<sup>22</sup>

In the nineteenth century *Dharmakoṣa-saṃgraha* (Asiatic Society Ms. No. G. 8055, fol. 44a) is the description of a one-faced, six-armed form of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, the *dhyāna* reading :

Uṣṇīṣavijayā is single-faced and six-handed. The principal right hand is in the act of touching the heart. The first pair of hands (from above) holds the double vajra, and the staff. The (remaining) hand of the second pair holds pair holds (the effigy of) the Tathāgata. The third pair holds the arrow and the lotus. She is seated in the vajrāsana.<sup>23</sup>

This very late description appears somewhat suspect, almost as if the author was basing his description on a damaged eight-armed image. The hand “touching the heart” possibly refers to an unfamiliar *mudrā*. If this principal right hand refers to the second set then the Buddha image would be held in the left hand. The arrow without a bow also seems impractical.

It is primarily the three-faced, eight-armed form that appears in sculpture and painting. The overwhelming majority of the images in Nepal, Tibet and China correspond closely to the *Sādhnamālā* description she is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* and is richly adorned. An effigy of Vairocana frequently is at the apex of her crown. In paintings and xylograph prints she is invariably depicted in a *caitya*. Her principal right hand is placed in front of her chest where it holds the *viśvavajra*. Her remaining right hands, moving clockwise, show *varada*, hold an arrow and display *buddhaśramaṇa*. The effigy of the Buddha on his lotus seat rests directly on the palm of the hand, there being no flower stem. Continuing clockwise, the left hands show *abhaya*, hold a bow, and display *dhyāna* with the hand, on the lap, holding a vessel. The only variation appears with the *mudrā* of the principal left hand, which is placed in front of the chest next to the right hand holding the *viśvavajra* (see chart). In a few cases it displays *tarjanī-pāśa* as prescribed, i.e., with the forefinger raised in a threatening or admonishing gesture and the hand holding a noose. In most cases, however, the hand is placed in front of the chest, the palm facing inward, with the middle and ring finger folded to touch the thumb while the forefinger and little finger extend out. A thread is sometimes held in the hand with both weighted ends hanging down rather than forming a noose or lasso that flares upward. In

some cases this is the same *mudrā* displayed by the hands holding the bow and arrow. This *mudrā* is usually referred to as *hariṇa*<sup>24</sup> or *kaṛaṇa*.<sup>25</sup> Or the forefinger may be joined to the thumb to form a circle while the other fingers are open, as in *vitarka* or *jñāna-mudrā*, usually adopted when an explanation or exposition is being given. In a few cases the fingers are not open but loosely applied to the thumb to form a ring. This *kaṭakā-mudrā* is often fashioned for goddesses for the purpose of inserting a fresh flower each day. In general, despite the variations even if referred to as *tarjanī*, the *mudrā* of the principal left hand suggests exposition or thoughtfulness rather than admonition or warning. Even when a noose is present it appears more like a thread and is non-threatening. This is possibly why some scholars have interpreted the hand as touching the heart, or have suggested *dharmacakra-mudrā* for the principal set of hands, or that both hands are holding the *viśvavajra*. These images all date from the fifteenth century or later and suggest that, aside from varied interpretations for the *mudrā* of the principal left hand, her iconographic features had crystallized by this time.

Although her image is rather rare in India, Debala Mitra has tentatively identified as Uṣṇīṣavijayā a small image discovered in the area in front of Monastery no. 2 at Ratmagiri in Orissa.<sup>26</sup> The image, which most likely was dislodged from the niche of a monolithic *stūpa*, can be ascribed to the late tenth century. This appears to be one of the earliest known images of this goddess and is of particular interest. She is seated in *sattvaparyāṅka* on a *viśvapadma* and has three faces. She is richly ornamented, wears a beaded *yajñopavīta*, and has a third eye in the center of each forehead. Each head is crowned by a tall *kirīṭa-mukuta* which merge into a single silhouette at the apex. Her principal left hand crosses in front of her chest where it displays *tarjanī-pāśa*, the rope forming a noose near her left shoulder (fig. 1). Her principal right hand is extended to her knee where it displays *varada*. Her other three hands are broken off, though one presumably held an arrow. Her lower left hand, placed on her seat, holds the stalk of a flower that apparently supports a vessel. The other two hands hold a bow (partially broken off) and a rosary. She thus holds six of the prescribed attributes or *mudrās*, the *viśvavajra* and the effigy of Buddha prescribed for two right hands being broken off. It is not clear, however, if she held a Buddha in one of the missing hands, considering that the five *tathāgatas* are dispersed in the background around her heads. Whereas Vairocana, at the apex above the crown

of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, is depicted in an almost flying posture, the other *tathāgatas* are seated in *vajraparyāṅka*. The image of Amitābha is placed at the lower right, just above the broken upper right hand of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, suggesting that he may have doubled as an attribute. Akṣobhya appears on the lower left while Amoghasiddhi and Ratanasambhava appear in the upper corners. The pedestal is decorated with a kneeling, bearded devotee and a censor on the dexter of the foliated lotus stalk while on the sinister are two bowls heaped with offerings. Due to the missing attributes and the alignment of the five *tathāgata* Buddhas on the backslab, it is not clear if the image is actually or if it represents Vajratārā. It is possible it represents an incipient form for this three (visible) faced, eight-armed iconographic format, which eventually crystallizes into two distinct goddesses, as the rosary is not prescribed for either goddess.

Slightly later in date and more developed in iconography is the Pāla period stone image from Nālandā now in the Indian Museum at Kolkata (fig. 2).<sup>27</sup> She is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* on a *viśvapaḍma*. Her principal right arm was crossed in front of her chest but is now broken off at the elbow. Vestiges of the *viśvavajra* are intact. Her principal left hand rests on her left knee where it holds a vessel. Her other right hands hold an arrow and the curvaceous stem of a lotus that has a full-blown flower and a smaller flower above that supports an effigy of a Buddha. The upper left hand holds a bow, the middle hand shows *abhaya*, while the lower hand displays *tarjanī-pāśa*. Her center head wears a tall *jaṭā-mukuta* decorated with jeweled chains while the side heads wear only a jeweled diadem. Above this *jaṭā-mukuta* is an effigy of Akṣobhya, rather than Vairocana as prescribed in the texts. A circular halo is etched behind her heads while the top of the back-slab is pointed. Three *stūpas* are dispersed along the upper edge. The effigy of Amitābha in one of her right hands and that of Akṣobhya, along with the three *stūpas*, thus replace the five *tathāgata* Buddhas of the above mentioned Orissan image. A kneeling devotee appears on each corner of the pedestal.

Also dating to the tenth-eleventh century is a bronze from Kashmir or Himachal Pradesh of Uṣṇīṣavijayā formerly in the Doris Wiener Gallery in New York (fig. 3).<sup>28</sup> She is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* on a tall *viśvapaḍma* (double lotus) resting on a pyramidal base that rises in three stages. Her principal right hand holds a diamond-shaped *viśvapaḍma* beneath her breasts while the corresponding left hand, resting on her left knee, holds a noose that rises stiffly up to the height of her left head. Her remaining right

hands display *varada*, hold an effigy of Amitābha, and lift an arrow above her heads. The upper left hand holds the bow, the middle hand lifts a vessel, while the lower hand displays *abhaya* as it supports a serpent. All three heads wear a jeweled crown and a scarf is loosely wrapped around her shoulders. Three tiers of parasols sit at the apex of the nimbus serving as the back-slab of the goddess. The three-tiered pedestal is typical of Kashmiri *stūpas*, as pointed out by Pal, while the lotus seat of the goddess simulates the dome of a *stūpa*. Access to the top of the pedestal is provided by a flight of steps. A male and a female donor are seated on the right and left ends of the pedestal roof. This is a rare example where the effigy of the Buddha is not held in the uplifted back right hand. Except for the principal set of hands, the sculptor is fastidious in counterbalancing the attributes held in right and left hands. *Varada* and *abhaya* are symmetrically aligned in the lower set, the arrow and bow in the upper set; while in the middle set the palms support the effigy of Buddha and an overflowing vessel on the right and left respectively.

An early Pāla style drawing of Uṣṇīṣavijayā from Eastern India<sup>29</sup> or Central Tibet,<sup>30</sup> tentatively dated to the eleventh or twelfth-century, forms part of the Kronos Collection in New York (fig. 4). Uṣṇīṣavijayā is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* on a lotus cushion in front of a miniature *stūpa*. Her principal right hand, in front of her chest, holds a *viśuvavaṅga* between her thumb and middle finger while her left hand, displaying *haraṇa* while holding a thread, rests its heel on the sole of her crossed right foot. The lower right hand, at her knee, displays *varada* while the left hand, in front of the opposite knee, holds the neck of a small vessel. Her middle right hand, in *kartari*, holds an arrow while the same left hand holds a bow. Her uplifted back right hand daintily holds the stem of a lotus that supports an effigy of Vairocana rather than Amitābha. Her corresponding left hand displays *abhaya*. The coiffure of her center head is shaped like a diminutive *stūpa*. She is flanked by Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi on her right and left respectively while a *vidyādhara* is at each upper corner of the picture. The pedestal is decorated with an alignment of four *dharmapālas* or guardians of the cardinal directions—Acala (east), Takkirāja (south), Nīladaṇḍa (west), and Mahābala (north). Each is in *pratyāliḍha* within a flaming *caltya* design. Their raised right hand lifts a weapon above their head while their left hand is at the chest in *tarjanī-pāśa*.

Similar in style is an image of Uṣṇīṣavijayā among the murals of Lhakhang Soma at Alchi in the mountains of Ladakh, northeast of

Kashmir and bordering western Tibet (fig. 5). Stylistically the murals, dating to the early thirteenth century, are in the "Western Tibetan version of what may be characterized as Pāla-Tibetan style."<sup>31</sup> Uṣṇīṣavijayā is seated on a lotus cushion in a *caitya* opening in front of a miniature *stūpa* with her heads slightly tilted to her left. All eight arms are symmetrically aligned. For the first time both principal hands are placed in front of her chest, the right one holding a *viśuvavajra* and the left one displaying *tarjanī-mudrā*. Each hand of her lowered set is placed in front of a knee with the right one displaying *varada* and the left one holding the neck of a vessel as on the previous image. The middle right hand holds the arrow and the left one holds the bow. The uplifted right hand, in *vandanābhinayī* (*Buddhaśramaṇa*), holds an effigy of Amitābha in its palm while the left hand displays *abhaya*. Floral designs are visible within the *caitya* behind the body of Uṣṇīṣavijayā. An image of Vairocana is seated in a *caitya* design crowning the *stūpa*. Four *dharmapālas* in *pratyāṇidhā* within *caitya* niches appear on the pedestal as on the drawing in the Kronos Collection.

In a twelfth-thirteenth century *thanka* from Kara-khoto (Tangut State of Xi Xia) now in the State Hermitage Museum, the placement of the hands is similar to the Alchi painting except the lowered left hand, holding the vessel, for the first time is placed on her lap in *dhyaṇa-mudrā*. A similar alignment of hands appears in a fourteenth century Tibetan *thanka* painting in the Musée Guimet where the goddess, housed in a *stūpa*, is flanked by a standing *bodhisattva* on either side as in the Kronos drawing.<sup>32</sup> This same order of *āyudhas* for Uṣṇīṣavijayā appears in a 1416 Nepalese *thanka* from the Zimmerman collection.<sup>33</sup> The goddess again appears within a *stūpa* and is flanked by a red and green *bodhisattva*. In the Tibetan "Four Maṇḍalas of the Vajravali Series" *thanka* dating to the 1390's, also in the Zimmerman collection, the principal left hand displaying *tarjanī* is slightly lowered so that it appears beneath the corresponding right hand supporting the *viśuvavajra*.<sup>34</sup> Aside from regional variation in dress and adornment, the only notable variation in later images, primarily Tibeto-Chinese, is the placement and demeanor of this left hand, whether it is emphatically raised or limply hangs below the corresponding right hand. Invariably the hand holds a *pāśa*, though it is more in the nature of a thread than a noose and, rather than flaring stiffly up as on earlier Indian examples, it often hangs down and has weighted ends. The depiction of the specific *mudrā* varies from image to image. The threatening *tarjanī* with the raised index finger typical on

Indian images appears only sporadically, late examples being a *circa* fifteenth century drawing from Sokh-nor near Kara-khoto now in the National Museum, New Delhi,<sup>35</sup> and a xylograph of Vijayā in the Narthang Pantheon.<sup>36</sup> More often both the index and little finger are raised or extended while the folded middle two fingers touch the thumb.<sup>37</sup> The original Indian connotation of this *mudrā* is thus lost, as it no longer appears menacing. In fact this same *mudrā*, rather than the more conventional *kartari-mudrā*, is often employed by the two hands holding the bow and arrow, as in the seventeenth-eighteenth century bronze images of the Olschak collection<sup>38</sup> and in the State Hermitage at Leningrad.<sup>39</sup> In these and other examples where there is no *pāśa* it almost appears as if this principal left hand is helping to balance the *viśvavajra* held in the right hand. In several cases the hand is lowered and the extended fingers point downward, as in her image as an attendant deity in the sixteenth century "Three Maṇḍala" *thangka* from the Ngor monastery, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art;<sup>40</sup> as the center deity of the "Maṇḍala of Long Life" psychogram from Ngor;<sup>41</sup> and as a major deity in the dKar-abyun lha-khang at Tabo.<sup>42</sup> In other variations, on a nineteenth century image from East Tibet in the collection of the Saint Louis Museum, the lower right hand no longer displays *varada* but rests palm inward against the right knee (fig. 6).<sup>43</sup> The primary left hand, far from menacing, delicately touches fingers to thumb as if measuring a pinch of salt.

## B. VAJRATĀRĀ

Whereas Uṣṇīṣavijayā is particularly worshipped for longevity, the popularity of Vajratārā stems primarily from the fact that she is "endowed with the supreme power of granting success to her worshippers in various protective and destructive rites," as stated by M. Ghosh :

While enumerating the benefits that would accrue from the worship of Vajra-Tārā, the *sādhana*s hold before the worshipper exceedingly attractive prospects of worldly enjoyments, material prosperity, immunity from troubles and dangers and success in all kinds of undertakings (*sarvakarma-prasiddhaye*). Apparently, these allurements were incorporated to attract grossly materialistic men who care more for this world than for spiritual upliftment.<sup>44</sup>

Accordingly, "tigers, thieves, crocodiles, lions, snakes, elephants, buffaloes, bears, bulls and the like will flee or even be

destroyed, at the mere recital of the name of the goddess.”<sup>45</sup> The greatest number of magical practices and charms invoked with the help of the *Tārā-mantra*, however, are prescribed for bewitching and overpowering (*vaśīkaraṇa*) women, one such rite (to subdue any woman born of man) consisting of offering one hundred and eight lotuses into the fire with this *mantra*.<sup>46</sup> In the introduction of *sādhana* no. 110 of the *Sāadhanamālā*, on the other hand, are embodied certain sublime aspects of Mahāyāna leading to transcendental perfect enlightenment (*auttara-sambodhi*). “The idea behind incorporating both noble ideas of maitrī, karuṇā, etc., and gross elements aimed at selfish gain to the extent of harming others in the *sādhana*s,” as noted by M. Ghosh, “is to cater to all inclinations, so that people from all walks of life resort to the worship of the formidable Vajra-Tārā.”<sup>47</sup>

In the *Sāadhanamālā* there are five *sādhana*s (nos., 93, 94, 95, 97, 110) devoted to the four-headed, eight-armed form of Vajratārā of yellow complexion, all of which conceive ten deities forming a *maṇḍala* around the goddess. The authorship of *sādhana* no. 110 is ascribed to Ratnākaraśānti, a contemporary of the Pāla king Mahīpāla (*circa* CE 988-1038). The *dhyaṇas* are all quite similar with only minor variations. *Sādhana* no. 93, for example, describes the form of the main deity as follows :

The meditator should conceive Vajra-Tārā in the center of the circle of (divine) Mothers, who is eight-armed, four-faced and decked in all ornaments. Golden in complexion, she is graceful and radiant with the auspicious marks of a virgin. She bears on her crown the figures of five Buddhas, and she is born of the consecration-water of Vajra and Sūrya. She is resplendent in her blooming youth and wears dangling gold kuṇḍalas. Seated on a viśvapadma, she radiates reddish light. She holds in her right hands a vajra (thunderbolt), a pāśa (noose), a sankha (conch-shell) and a śara (arrow) and in her left a vajrāṅkuśa (elephant-goat marked with a thunderbolt), an utpala (night lotus) and a dhanus (bow), the fourth hand being in the tarjanī-mudrā. Conceiving her in the vajraparyāṅkāśana (the worshipper) may conquer the three worlds.<sup>48</sup>

In some cases, as in *sādhana* no. 110, there are only four *tathāgatas* on the crown-Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi—the missing Ratnasambhava probably being



represented symbolically by the yellow color of the goddess. There are also only four *tathāgatas* in *sādhana* no. 97 where the *utpala* is yellow in color, the goad is not marked with a *vajra* and Ratnasarṁbhava is the parental sire. This appears to be the basic iconographic form (**mode A**) for Vajratārā with the noose being aligned with the goad, the conch with the lotus, and the arrow with the bow in respect to secondary sets of hands while the primary or front set holds the *vajra* and displays *tarjanī*. In sculpture, however, this specific order in respect to matched hand alignment is not followed. The conch is invariably held in the lowest right hand, which is frequently resting on the right knee as in the variant alignment of mode (A) in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* and in *sādhana* no. 95, both of whom also have Ratnasarṁbhava as the parental sire.

In the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, she is of golden complexion and is seated in the center of an eight-petal lotus. Although the same *āyudhas* are mentioned, their alignment is slightly varied. In her right hands are a *vajra*, a noose, an arrow and a conch-shell while in her four left hands are an *utpala* of yellow color, a bow, a goad and *tarjanī-mudrā*. The conch is thus in her lowered right hand and is aligned with the goad while the noose is aligned with the lotus.<sup>49</sup> In *sādhana* no. 95 *varada-mudrā* is added on the right, probably combining with the hand holding the case with the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* where the conch is assigned to this lowest right hand. The conch now, however, is aligned with the bow while the arrow is aligned with the lotus. In both cases the alignment of the *āyudhas* is not consistent with their more conventional or practical usage. In both descriptions her crown bears images of five *tathāgatas* while her spiritual sire is Ratnasarṁbhava.

In *sādhana* no. 94 *varada* replaces the noose in one of her right hands. The noose, marked with a *vajra*, is shifted to the principal left hand displaying *tarjanī* so that there are essentially four *āyudhas* plus *tarjanī* for the left hands, though the combination of *pāśa* with *tarjanī* (*tarjanī-pāśa*) appears frequently with various deities. The resulting alignment of *āyudhas* with their corresponding right and left hands, however, is again quite curious—*varada* with the bow, the arrow with the lotus, and the conch with the goad. There are four *tathāgatas* in her crown. This iconographic variant can be termed **mode (B)**.

All five *sādhanas* of the *Sādhanamālā* and the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* describe the ten attending goddesses forming the *maṇḍala* of Vajratārā. Accordingly, they originate from the ten syllables of the *Tārā-mantra*, i.e., “*Om̐ Tāre tutāre ture svāha.*”<sup>50</sup>

Although there are some minor deviations in respect to name, disposition, pose, weapons, ornaments, color and sire in the different texts and *sādhana*s, the general alignment is standardized and consists of 1) Puṣpatārā (east); 2) Dhūpatārā (south); 3) Dīpatārā (west); and 4) Gandhatārā (north) in the first circle while the second circle contains 5) Vajrāṅkuśī (east); 6) Vajrapāśī (south); 7) Vajrasphoṭā (west); and 8) Vajraghaṇṭā (north). In the upper region (zenith) is 9) Uṣṇīṣavijayā while in the lower region (nadir) is 10) Sumbhā. As their names imply, the deities of the first circle are the deified *pūjopakaraṇas* or materials used in ritual worship, i.e., flower (*puṣpa*), incense (*dhūpa*), lamp (*dīpa*) and sandal paste or unguent (*gandha*) while the attributes in the right hand of the deities in the second circle suggest that they are personified *āyudhas*, i.e. goad marked with a thunderbolt (*vajrāṅkuśa*), noose marked with a thunderbolt (*vajrapāśa*), bolt/chain marked with a thunderbolt (*vajrasphoṭā*), and bell marked with a thunderbolt (*vajraghaṇṭā*).<sup>51</sup>

In contrast to these two variant modes in textual accounts, the surviving images of Vajratārā can actually be divided into six variant modes in respect to iconographic details. The majority of the images correspond to mode (A). Although the order of *āyudhas* varies, in several examples the alignment duplicates the order in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*. The conch is held in the lowest right hand though the specific *mudrā* or manner in which it is held varies. The hand may display *varada-mudrā*, *karaṇa-mudrā* or it may cup the conch with all five fingers. In one of the earliest surviving images, a small, dislodged sculpture at Ratnagiri, the hand displays *varada* as prescribed in *sādhana* no. 95. The image, carved of chlorite, was originally housed in the niche of a small monolithic *stūpa* (fig. 7).<sup>52</sup> Tārā is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* on a *viśvapadma*. She has three (visible) heads and eight arms. Her principal right hand, upraised, wields a *vajra* while the corresponding left hand is placed in front of her chest displaying *tarjanī-mudrā*. Her lower right hand, in *varada*, holds a conch while the other two hands hold an arrow and a noose. Her topmost left hand, extended straight out from the shoulder, holds a bow while the two lowered hands hold an *utpala* and a goad. She is richly ornamented and her facial expression is calm. A tall, tiered *mukuta* crowns each head. There is no *tathāgata* present and the rectangular back-slab is unembellished. The image can be dated to the late tenth-early eleventh century.

A larger and more impressive image is presently housed in the sanctum of the Uttareśvara temple at Ayodhā in northern Balasore

district. It is also carved of a dark chloritic stone and is more complex in iconographic details (fig. 9). The image is well preserved except for portions of three left arms and the upper right corner of the back-slab. Tārā is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* in a frontal pose on a *viśvapaḍma*. Her principal right hand, upraised, wields a *vajra* while the corresponding left hand, placed in front of the chest, displays *tarjanī-mudrā*. The lowered right hand holds a conch, the fingers cupping the base of the shell, while the other two hold a noose and a pair of arrows. The objects in her remaining left hands are a *vajrāṅkuśa*, a bow and the *nīlotpala*. She is richly adorned and all three (visible) faces are illumined by a soft smile. Each head wears a tall tiered crown with a lotus-finial. She wears a jeweled tiara at the base of each head with a projecting *kirīṭa* or crest. Above the crest of the center face is an effigy of a *tathāgata* with his hands in front of his chest to suggest it is not Ratnasambhava.<sup>53</sup> Tārā is surrounded by four companion goddesses, one opposite each knee and one on either side of her three heads. These goddesses are each seated in *vajraparyāṅka* on a *viśvapaḍma* and hold their attribute in both hands placed on the lap. Starting with the lowest one on the dexter and moving clockwise the goddesses are Puṣpatārā, Dīpatārā, Dhūpatārā and Gandhatārā.<sup>54</sup> They represent the four *pūjopakaraṇas* of the first circle, facing the cardinal directions, and are female emanations of the *pāramitā* of the four *tathāgatas*. This image can likewise be dated to the late tenth or early eleventh century.

Six of the companion goddesses appear on a mutilated Vajratārā found at Bara (District Birbhum, West Bengal) that is presently housed in the Museum of the Directorate of Archaeology, Government of West Bengal.<sup>55</sup> The remaining goddesses — Puṣpatārā, Dhūpatārā, Dīpatārā and Gandhatārā—presumably would have been on the missing upper section of the back-slab. Vajratārā is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* on a *viśvapaḍma* with her torso slightly flexed to her right and her heads tilted to the left. Although all eight of her arms are broken, it is obvious that her raised front right hand wielded the *vajra* while the left hand was in *tarjanī* in front of her chest. The lowered right hand rested on the knee where it held the conch though it is not known if it also displayed *varada*. Fragments of the lotus, bow and goad are visible on the sinister side of the back-slab. The seated effigy of Ratnasambhava appears on the *karaṇḍa-mukuta* of her principal head. Depending on the alignment of the missing arrow and noose, the order of *āyudhas* follows the format of the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*.

A more complete iconographic program appears on the late eleventh-early twelfth century Vajratārā image possibly from Nālandā, now forming part of the Avery Brundage Collection of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.<sup>56</sup> She is likewise seated in *vajraparyāṅka* on a *viśvapadma* with her torso flexed to her right to suggest exertion in wielding the *vajra* (now missing) with her raised front right hand (fig. 11). The conch in her lowered right hand is partially damaged while the arrow and the noose are both intact. Her front left hand, crossing in front of the chest to display *tarjanī*, is broken off. The uplifted back hand holds a bow, the middle hand a goad and the lowered hand a lotus stalk that blossoms opposite her shoulder. At the apex of the pointed stele or back-slab is an image of Akṣobhya, rather than Ratnasambhava, seated on a *viśvapadma*. Below him are the Zenith (Uṣṇīṣavijayā) and the Nadir (Sumbhā) guardians of the *maṇḍala* on the right and left respectively. The rounded top corners contain Dhūpatārā on the right and Dīpatārā on the left while Vajrapāśī and Vajrasphoṭī appear opposite the heads of Tārā on the right and left sides respectively. Puṣpatārā and Gandhatārā are aligned on the right and left opposite the *viśvapadma* seat of Tārā while Vajrāṅkuśī and Vajraghaṇṭā appear on the ends below the seat.<sup>57</sup> Numerous devotees also appear on the pedestal.

The ten companion goddesses also appear in a bronze or octo-alloy lotus with eight petals that was exhumed from a *kunkar* quarry at Chandipore, close to Patharghata (District Bhagalpur, Bihar), and now housed in the Indian Museum, Kolkata (fig. 10).<sup>58</sup> The petals move up and down and thus can open and close. When closed, the lotus presents the appearance of a bud and when opened, it reveals in the centre the image of Vajratārā and against the inner face of each petal the eight directional goddesses. The goddesses of the cardinal directions are seated in *vajraparyāṅka* while those of the intermediate directions are *ālīḍha-pada*. (Uṣṇīṣavijayā and Sumbhā stand on outside, separate lotuses that issue from the foliated stem of the principal lotus.<sup>59</sup> Vajratārā is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* in a *dvibhanga* pose with her torso bent to her right and the axis of her three heads tilted back towards her left. Her principal right hand is uplifted and brandishes a *vajra* while the corresponding left hand, crossed in front of her waist, displays *tarjanī*. Her lowest right hand, resting on her knee, holds a conch while the middle hand holds a noose and the upper hand has bud-shaped arrows. The lowest left hand, resting on her left knee, holds an elephant-goad while the middle hand has the stalk of a lotus and the uplifted hand has a

flowery bow. She is richly adorned and wears a *stūpa*-shaped headdress. The image possibly dates to the twelfth century.

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is a badly abraded small bronze image of Vajratārā from eastern India though there are no companion deities forming a *maṇḍala*.<sup>60</sup> She is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* and her principal set of hands which were wielding the *vajra* and displaying *tarjanī* are partially broken. The conch and goad in the lower set of hands are mostly indistinct. The two remaining right hands hold a noose and an arrow while the left hands carry the stalk of a lotus and a bow. No *tathāgata* Buddha is visible on her tall *mukūṭa*. The third eye was probably inlaid with silver.

There are also two small bronze Pāla style images of Vajratārā in private collections in Germany that correspond to mode (A). In the first example, ascribed to the eleventh century, she is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* on a *viśvapaḍma* with her torso slightly bent to her right and her head tilted to her left. Her raised principal right hand wielding the *vajra* is broken off at the wrist.<sup>61</sup> The principal or front left hand displays *tarjanī* while the lowest hand, resting on the knee and displaying *karaṇa*<sup>62</sup> or *kaṭakā*<sup>63</sup> (with index and little finger stretched out), holds the conch. The corresponding left hand holds goad. The middle set of the remaining hands holds an arrow and bow on the right and left respectively while the upper set holds a noose and lotus. The order of *āyudhas* thus corresponds to the alignment in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*. In the larger second image, ascribed to the twelfth century, her body flexion is more pronounced and her *stūpa*-shaped headdress is taller.<sup>64</sup> The noose and arrow held in her middle two right hands are transposed, however, so that though visually aligned, the hand holding the arrow is actually associated with the hand holding the lotus while the noose is associated with the hand holding the bow. The hand holding the conch again has the index and little finger outstretched. The eyes and *ūrṇās* on all four heads and the body ornaments are inlaid with silver (fig. 12).

In the Dacca Museum is a bronze image holding a *vajra* in her principal right hand while the corresponding left hand, in front of her chest, displays *tarjanī*.<sup>65</sup> The other right hands hold a conch, goad and arrow while the left hands hold a lotus, bow and *pāśa*. In this variant or **mode (B)** format the goad and noose switch sides.

Another variant, **mode (C)**, is based on *sādhana* 94 with *varada* replacing the *pāśa* on the right side, the *pāśa* moving to the left side where it is combined with *tarjanī*. A rare example of this

format appears on an image presently affixed to the inside north wall of the antarala of the Bhīmeśvara temple at Mukhaliṅgam. The image is virtually obscured by the darkness of its setting. In active worship as a Hindu goddess, it is additionally smeared with coats of vermillion so that surface details are partially obfuscated (fig. 8). She is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* on a *viśvapadma* and has three heads. Each head wears a tall *karaṇḍa-mukuta* which merge into a single silhouette at the apex. Her principal left arm crosses in front of her chest where the hand displays *tarjanī-pāśa* with the noose appearing opposite her left shoulder. Her principal right forearm is raised and wields an indistinct object, possibly a *vajra*. Her lower right hand is in *varada*. The middle two hands are broken off at the wrists. One obviously held an arrow. The object in the remaining hand is missing. The upper left hand holds a bow, the middle hand holds a goad, and the lower hand is at the knee where it holds the stalk of a *nīlotpala* with the closed blossom appearing above the bow. It is possible that the *tathāgatas* are carved on the back-slab though at present only the image of Akṣobhya(?) is visible, opposite her left head, the remainder of the upper slab being obfuscated with accretions of paste and grime. There may also be an effigy of a *tathāgata* on the *mukuta* of the center head. The pedestal has two kneeling devotees at each corner and offerings and ritual paraphernalia at the center. As in the image of Uṣṇīṣavijayā from Ratnagiri, this is an incipient form of an eight-armed format for a multi-faced, eight-armed goddess though the uplifted principal right hand wielding a *vajra*(?) and the goad suggest that in this case it probably represents Vajratārā.

In later examples of Vajratārā with the addition of *varada*, however, it is the front right hand that is lowered in *varada* while the corresponding left hand crossing in front of the chest holds the stalk of a flower. This alignment of *āyudhas*, apparently popular in Tibet, consists of *varada*, *vajra*, arrow and conch on the right while on the left it is *utpala*, bow, goad and noose.<sup>66</sup> An example with this alignment, published by W.E. Clark, appeared among the Tibeto-Chinese bronze images of the Lamaistic pantheon housed in the Pao-hsing Lou (a Lama temple) at Beijing and visited by Baron von Stael-Holstein, who had them photographed in 1926-27.<sup>67</sup> Aṣṭabhuja-Vajratārā (fo-mu) is seated in *vajraparyāṅka* with her front right hand on the knee displaying *varada*. The corresponding left hand, in front of her chest, shows *vitarka* while holding the sinuous stalk of a lotus that blossoms opposite her left face. Her remaining left hands, moving clockwise from the bottom, hold a

conch, arrow and *vajra* while the corresponding left hands, in *kaṭakā* with the index and little finger pointing outward, hold the noose, goad and a bow,. This alignment of *varada* and lotus for the principle set of hands can be classified as **mode (D)**. A similar alignment, as noted by M. Ghosh, appears on a relief image found at Sarasvatisthan close to the Svayambhu temple at Kathmandu,<sup>68</sup> which was illustrated by B. Benoytosh.<sup>69</sup>

In late Tibetan examples, as in a Tibeto-Mongol Pantheon<sup>70</sup> and the Narthang Pantheon,<sup>71</sup> the alignment of *āyudhas* appears to follow that prescribed in the *Niṣpānnayogāvalī*. In each case, however, both front hands are uplifted while the remaining hands radiate symmetrically on either side. The principal set of hands thus holds a *vajra* and a lotus, the second (from the top) holds a noose and the bow, the third holds an arrow and a goad, and the lowest holds a conch and displays *tarjanī* (*haraṇa*) on the right and left respectively. For the purpose of this study this particular alignment can be classified as **mode (E)**.

In **mode (F)**, as exemplified in a fifteenth century bronze image from Nepal in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the principal set of hands holds a *vajra* and a lotus on the right and left respectively though both hands are lowered.<sup>72</sup> The right hand, on her lap, balances an upright standing *vajra* on the palm while the left, resting on her left thigh, holds the stalk of a lotus that blossoms below her left breast. Only a conch and the noose are intact on the right and left respectively of the remaining six hands, each in the middle hand. She is seated in a rigid *vajraparyāṅka* pose with a slightly tilted head and downcast eyes suggesting meditation. Only the upper portion of her lotus seat has survived. In a similar example housed in the Indian Museum, Kolkata (**fig. 12**),<sup>73</sup> her torso is flexed slightly to her right and she looks straight forward. Her bent principal right hand holds an upright *vajra* in front of her waist. The left hand, the wrist resting on her left knee, holds either a noose or the stalk of a lotus, the flower blooming above her left shoulder. The third hand held either the lotus, noose or possibly a goad while the top hand held a bow, part of it still intact. A third example in mode (F) from Nepal, as pointed out by M. Ghosh, has been published in the *Viśvakarma*.<sup>74</sup>

There is thus a similar softening of the overall ambience of Vajratārā in her iconographic development. In contrast to the variable treatment of the *tarjanī-mudrā* of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, which gradually became less emphatic and threatening as her iconography crystallized, with Vajratārā it is the alignment and or disposition of

the *vajra* that gradually softened her demeanor. These two eastern images are especially interesting as they represent these two goddesses in their initial iconographic state prior to such crystallization.

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15. P. Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, p. 132. fig. 71.
16. P. Pal, *Art of Nepal*, p. 137, S66.
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19. S.K. Saraswati, *Tantrayāna Art : An Album* (Calcutta, 1977), p. LXVIII.



20. Barbara Lipton and Nima Dorjee Ragnubs, *Treasures of Tibetan Art : Collections of the Jacques Marachals Museum of Tibetan Art* (New York, 1996), pp. 114-15.
21. Alice Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, (New Delhi, 1978 reprint of 1928 second edition), p. 135. She does not indicate her source but it appears that she is combining textual descriptions with visual images.
22. B. C. Olschak, *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet*, p. 40.
23. Dipak Chandra Bhattacharyya, *Tantric Buddhist Iconographic Sources* (New Delhi, 1974), p. 36.
24. Ramesh S. Gupte, *Iconography of the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains* (Bombay, 1972) p. XXX; and Fredrick W. Bunce, *An Encyclopaedia of Buddhist Deities, Demigods, Godlings, Saints and Demons*, 2 vols. (New Delhi, 1994), II, p. 1022, fig. 273.
25. Antoinette K. Gordon, *The Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism*, revised edition (New Delhi, 1978 reprint of 1914 edition), p. 20.
26. Debala Mitra, *Ratnagiri (1958-61)*, MASI, No. 80, 2 vols. (New Delhi, 1981, 1983), II, p. 307.
27. R.D. Baneji, *Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture*, ASI Vol. XL VII (Delhi, 1933), pl. XLIIa; and S.K. Saraswati, *Tantrayāna Art : An Album*, fig. 183.
28. Pratapaditya Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir* (New Delhi, 1975), p. 186, pl. 70; and Chandra L. Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes : Technology, Style, and Choices* (Newark, 1997), fig. U305.
29. Steven Kossak suggests that the image is of Bengali style and that, aside from a Tibetan inscription on the reverse, has no clearly definable Tibetan pictorial elements. See Steven M. Kossak and Jane Casey Singer, *Sacred Visions : Early Paintings from Central Tibet* (New York, 1998), p. 66.
30. Robert E. Fisher, *Art of Tibet* (New York, 1997) pl. 88.
31. Pratapaditya Pal, *A Buddhist Paradise : The Murals of Alchi; Western Himalayas* (Basel, 1982), p. 56, pl. LS 31.
32. <http://rmn.engine reef.com/rcs/RMN/publisher/Guimet/English/fcol/himalaya/oe.../index.js> 7/3/01.
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34. Marilyn M. Rhie and Robert A. F. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion: The Sacred Art of Tibet* (New York, 1991), p. 227, pl. 73.
35. Amarendra Nath, "An Image of Uṣṇīṣavijayā from Sokh-nor," *East and West*, Vol. 30, Nos 1-4 (1980), pp. 135-46, figs. 1-2.
36. L. Chandra, *Buddhist Iconography*, I, p. 375, fig 1008.

37. B. C. Olschak, *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet*, refers to this *mudrā* as *tarjanī* while the *mudrā* with the raised index finger is named *karaṇa-mudrā* (p. 218) whereas A. K. Gordon, *The Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism*, pp. 21-33, has the reverse name for these the *mudrās* as in India iconographical books.
38. B. C. Olschak, *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet*, p. 94.
39. M. Rhie and R. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion : The Sacred Art of Tibet*, p. 318.
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42. O. C. Handa, *Tabo Monastery and Buddhism in the Trans-Himalaya* (New Delhi, 1994), pp. 120-21, pl. 75.
43. Chandra L. Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes : Technology, Style and Choices* (Newark, 1997), pp. 219-20, pl. E219.
44. M. Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India*, p. 81.
45. B. Bhattacharyya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, p. 243.
46. B. Bhattacharyya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, p. 243; and M. Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India*, p. 81.
47. M. Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India*, p. 81-82.
48. M. Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India*, p. 76.
49. *Niṣpannayogāvalī* of Abhayakaragupta, ed. B. Bhattacharyya (Baroda, 1949), p. 38.
50. B. Bhattacharyya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, p. 243.
51. M. Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India*, p. 78-80.
52. D. Mitra, *Ratnagiri*, I, p. 148, pl. XCVII (A).
53. N.K. Sahu states that each of the heads has a pyramidal crown with an image of a *tathāgata*. In my photographs it is not possible to see if the side heads contain a *tathāgata* image. See N.K. Sahu, *Buddhism in Orissa* (Cuttack, 1958), p. 211.
54. The alignment of the *pūjopakaraṇas* differs from textual accounts with *Dīpatārā* and *Dhūpatārā* being transposed.
55. Acc. no. S. 10. See M. Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India*, p. 85, ill. 31.
56. Rene-Yvon Lefebvre d' Argence and Terese Tse, *Indian and South-East Asian Stone Sculptures from the Avery Brundage Collection* (Pasadena, 1969), p. 80, fig. 35.

57. Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *Leaves from the Bodhi Tree : The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th centuries) and Its International Legacy* (Seattle and London, 1990), pp. 164-65.
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59. Each of these goddesses has been described and reproduced by M. Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India*, pp. 87-89, ill. 32c-1.
60. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue of the Indian collections in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Part II* (Boston, 1923), p. 79 and pl. XXXVIII; and M. Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India*, p. 84.
61. Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong, 1981), pl. 66F.
62. As defined by A.K. Gordon (*Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism*), p. 20; R.S. Gupte (*Iconography of the Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains*); and Fredrick W. Bunce, *An Encyclopaedia of Buddhist Deities, Demigods, Godlings, Saints and Demons*, 2 vols. (New Delhi, 1994), II, p. 1023, (though the ring finger is also stretched in his illustration 275).
63. As defined by Calambur Sivaramamuri, *The Art of India* (New York, 1977), p. 535, fig. d.
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65. M. Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India*, p. 90.
66. A.K. Gordon, *The Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism*, p. 75.
67. Walter Eugene Clark (ed.), *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*, two volumes in one (New York, 1965 reprint of 1937 edition), ill. A 6 B 14 no. p. 210.
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69. B. Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, p. 243, fig. 182. The image is not very clear.
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71. L. Chandra, *Buddhist Iconography*, I p. 363, fig. 971.
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73. Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal : Part I, Sculpture* (Leiden, 1974), pl. 238.
74. M. Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India*, p. 89.

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USNISAVIJAYA DESCRIPTIONS <sup>o</sup>									
Text	right hands	1	2	3	4	4	3	2	1 left hands
<i>Dharmakosa-samgraha</i>		<i>visuvavajra</i>	at heart	arrow				Buddha	lotus
<i>Sadhanamala</i>		<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i>	
USNISAVIJAYA IMAGES & XYLOGRAPHS									
Site	right hands	1	2	3	4	4	3	2	1 left hands
Ratanagiri	10-11th C	<i>varada</i>	X	X	X	rosary	bow	lotus/vessel	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>
Kashmir : bronze	10-11th C	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	Buddha	arrow	bow	vessel	<i>abhaya/naga</i>	noose
Pala (Indian Museum)	11th C	X	varada	arrow	Buddha+	bow	<i>abhaya</i>	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>	vessel
Pala/Tibet dwg; Kronos	11-12th C	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	∞Buddha+	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	vessel	<i>harina-pasa</i>
Atchi : Lkhang Soma	13th C	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	vessel	<i>tarjani</i>
Nepal : <i>Mandala</i> ptg	1416	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i>	<i>tarjani?</i>
Nepal : sketchbook (Swz)	17th C	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i> <sup>^</sup>	<i>harina</i>
Nepal : Pancaraksa mss. ++		jewel	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i>	<i>mudra</i> *
Nepal : ptg		<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	vessel	<i>mudra</i> *
Nepal : Paubha ptg (Swz)	1822	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	vessel	<i>uilaraka</i>
Tibet : ptg (Museum Guimet)	14th C	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i>	<i>tarjani</i>
Tibet : <i>Four Mandalas</i> ptg	1390's	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i> <sup>^</sup>	<i>mudra</i> *
Tibet : <i>thanka</i> (Oxford)	14th C	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i>	<i>harina-pasa</i>
Tibet : bronze	1450-1550	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	X	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	X	<i>dhyana/vessel</i>	<i>mudra</i> *
Tibet : sketchbook	16th C	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i>	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>
Tibet : bronze <i>stupa</i>	16th C	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i>	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>
Tibet : <i>Three Mandalas</i> **	16th C	<i>visuvavajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	?	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i> <sup>^</sup>	<i>mudra</i> *
			varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i>	<i>harina-pasa</i>

Tibet : <i>thanka</i> (Rossi & R)	16th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>harina</i>
Tibet : Tabo monastery	17th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>ularka~</i>
Tibet : <i>Kanjur</i> (42)	18th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>
Tibet : <i>Bhadrakalpika-sutra</i>		<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>
Tibet : Narthang pantheon		<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>
Tibet : scroll painting		<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>
Tibet : 300 icons	18th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>
Tibet : bronze (Gordon)		<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>harina</i>
Tibet : bronze (Getty)		<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>mudra*</i>
Tibet : bronze (Getty)		<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	X	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	X	dhyana/vessel	<i>mudra*</i>
Tibet : bronze (Getty)		<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	X	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>mudra*</i>
Tibet : Sakyasri Mss**	18th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>mudra*</i>
Tibet : bronze (ST. Louis)	19th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	X	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>harina</i>
Tibet : bronze (Essen col)	19th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	X	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	X	dhyana/vessel	<i>harina</i>
Tibet : <i>thanka</i> (Essen)**	19th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	X	dhyana/vessel^	<i>harina-pasa</i>
Tibet : xylograph <i>Tsak-ll</i>		<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel^	<i>ularka</i>
China : <i>thanka</i> (Hermitage)	13th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>tarjani</i>
China : drawing (Nat. Mus)	15th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>
China : bronze (Hermitage)	17th C	X	varada	X	X	X	X	dhyana/X	<i>harina</i>
China : Pao-hsiang Lou	18th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>kalaka-hasta</i>
China : Pao-hsiang Lou	18th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>kalaka-hasta</i>
China : Chu Fo P/u-sa Mss	18th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>harina</i>
China : bronze (Zurich)	18th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	X	X	<i>abhaya</i>	X	dhyana/X	<i>harina</i>
China : bronze (Belgium)	18th C	<i>visuava/jra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	dhyana/vessel	<i>harina</i>



China : <i>thanka</i> (Marchais)	19th C	<i>ulsuauvajra</i>	varada	arrow	Buddha	<i>abhaya</i>	bow	<i>dhyana/vessel</i>	<i>harina</i>		
° Alignment begins with principal right hand and then continues clockwise from lowest right hand to principal left hand.											
X missing attribute											
+ Buddha is seated on a lotus held in the hand											
* the <i>mudra</i> is indistinct in my photographic source											
~ with little finger pointing down											
^ asoka issuing from vessel											
++ reproduced in <i>Indian Buddhist Iconography</i> by B. Bhattacharyya											
** As a secondary deity in the mandala painting											
∞ Vairocana											
<b>VAJRATARA DESCRIPTIONS</b>											
Text	right hands	1	2	3	4	4	3	2	1left	Buddhas Mode	
<i>Sadhanamala (sadhana 93)</i>	<i>vajra</i>	arrow		conch	<i>pasa</i>	goad+	<i>utpala</i>	bow	<i>tarjani</i>	5	A
<i>Sadhanamala (sadhana 110)</i>	<i>vajra</i>	arrow		conch	<i>pasa</i>	goad+	<i>utpala</i>	bow	<i>tarjani</i>	4	A
<i>Sadhanamala (sadhana 97)</i>	<i>vajra</i>	arrow		conch	<i>pasa</i>	goad	<i>padma</i> ~	bow	<i>tarjani</i>	4	A
<i>Nispannayogavali</i>	<i>vajra</i>	conch		arrow	<i>pasa</i>	<i>padma</i> ~	bow	goad	<i>tarjani</i>	5	A
<i>Sadhanamala (sadhana 95)</i>	<i>vajra</i>	vara-conch		arrow	<i>pasa</i>	goad+	<i>utpala</i>	bow	<i>tarjani</i>	5	A
<i>Sadhanamala (sadhana 94)</i>	<i>vajra</i>	varada		conch	arrow	goad+	<i>utpala</i>	bow	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>	4	C
Tibetan (A.K. Gordon)		varada	conch	arrow	<i>vajra</i>	bow	goad	noose	<i>padma</i>		D
<b>VAJRATARA IMAGES</b>											
Site	right hands	1	2	3	4	4	3	2	1left	Buddhas Mode	
Ratnagiri	10th C	<i>vajra</i>	vara-conch	arrow	<i>pasa</i>	bow	lotus	goad	<i>tarjani</i>	0	A

Ayodhya	10-11th C	<i>vajra</i>	conch	<i>pasa</i>	arrows	goad+	bow	lotus	<i>tarjani</i>	Vairocana	A
*Pala (Berlin)	11th C	X	conch	arrow	<i>pasa</i>	lotus	bow	goad+	<i>tarjani</i>		A
Bara, Bengal	11th C	<i>vajra</i> ?	conch?	X	X	lotus	bow	goad	X	Ratnasambhava	A
Samath (Nat Museum)	11th C	<i>vajra</i> ?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	5	?
Pala (Boston)	11th C	<i>vajra</i> ?	conch?	<i>pasa</i>	arrow	bow	X	lotus	<i>tarjani</i>	0	A
Nalanda (S.F.)	11-12th C	X	conch	arrow	<i>pasa</i>	bow	goad	lotus	X		A
*Patharghata, Bihar	12th C	<i>vajra</i>	conch	<i>pasa</i>	arrow	bow	lotus	goad	<i>tarjani</i>		A
*Pala (Berlin)	12th C	<i>vajra</i>	conch	<i>pasa</i>	arrow	lotus	bow	goad	<i>tarjani</i>	Aksobhya	A
*Bengal (Dacca Museum)		<i>vajra</i>	conch	goad	arrow	lotus	bow	<i>pasa</i>	<i>tarjani</i>		B
Mukhalingam	10-11th	<i>vajra</i>	<i>varada</i> ?	X	X	bow	goad	lotus	<i>tarjani-pasa</i> ?		B
* China (Pao-hsiang Lou)		<i>varada</i>	conch	arrows	<i>vajra</i>	bow	goad	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>	lotus		D
Nepal (Sarasvatiathan)		<i>varada</i>	conch	arrow	<i>pasa</i>	bow	goad	<i>tarjani-pasa</i>	lotus		D
Tibet : Narthang pantheon		<i>vajra</i>	conch	arrow	<i>pasa</i>	bow	goad	<i>tarjani</i> lotus**			E
Tibet-Mongol pantheon		<i>vajra</i>	conch	arrow	<i>pasa</i>	bow	goad	<i>tarjani</i> lotus**			E
*Nepal (Boston)	15th C	<i>vajra</i> <sup>00</sup>	X	conch	X	X	<i>pasa</i>	X	lotus		F
*Nepal (Indian Museum)	15th C	<i>vajra</i> <sup>00</sup>	X	X	X	bow	X	X	lotus?		F
Nepal ( <i>Visvakarma</i> )		<i>vajra</i> <sup>00</sup>	conch	X	arrow	bow	X	<i>tarjani</i> lotus			F

<sup>0</sup> Alignment begins with principal right hand and then continues clockwise from lowest right hand to principal left hand.

\* bronze

+ vajra-tipped

<sup>00</sup> hand held at waist ~ yellow utpala

\*\* principal left hand also uplifted.



Fig. 1. Ratnagiri Uśṇīṣavijayā, 9 1/2 by 6 1/4 inches, Late 10th-early 11th century (copyright ASI)

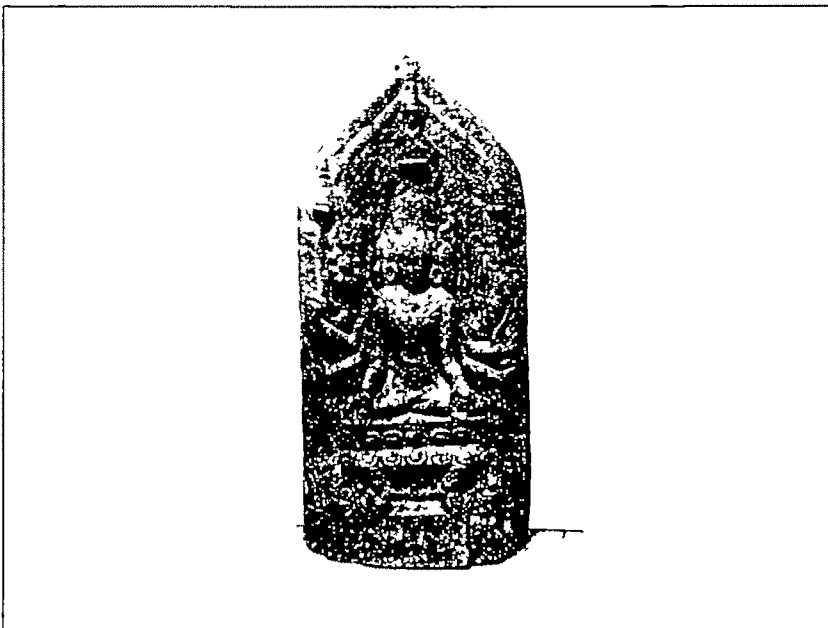


Fig 2 Nalanda Uśṇīṣavijayā, circa 11th century (copyright Indian Museum, Kolkata)

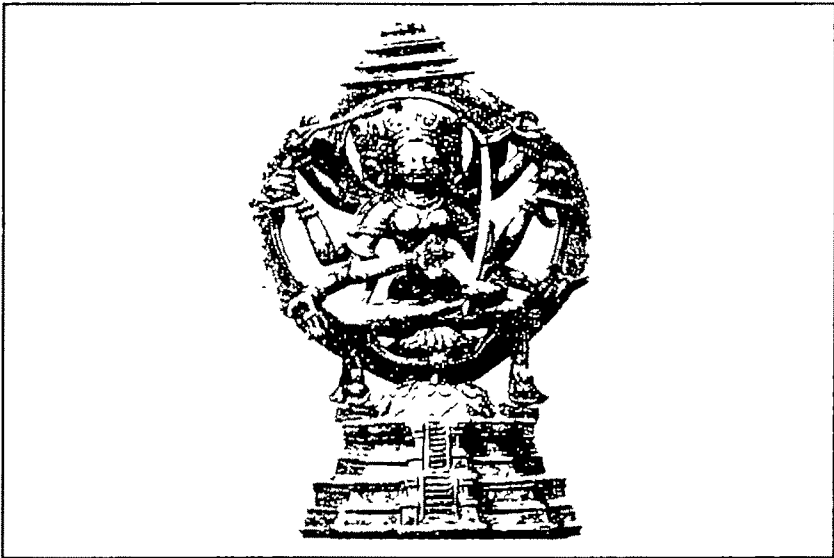


Fig. 3. Kashmir or Himachal Pradesh : Uṣṇīṣavijayā; (bronze); 6 3/4 inches high. 10th-11th century (copyright Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz; photo Doris Wiener Gallery, New York).



Fig. 4. Eastern India or central Tibet : Uṣṇīṣavijayā; (distemper on silk). 9 by 7 inches. 11th-12th century (The Kronos Collections; copyright The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).



Fig. 5. Alchi : Lhakang-Soma : Uṣṇīṣavijayā; (wall mural) 13th century (copyright Ravi Kumar, Visual Dharma Publications).



Fig. 6. East Tibet : Uṣṇīṣavijayā; (leaded brass); 7 by 6 1/4 inches. 19th century (copyright The Saint Louis Art Museum, gift of Mrs. Frances B. Dawson in memory of Mrs. Rosalind Day).

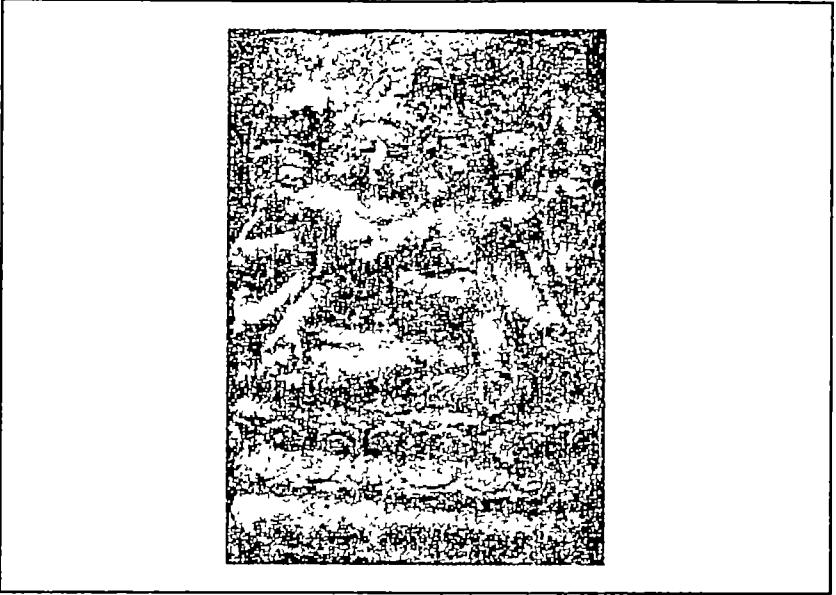


Fig. 7. Ratnagiri : Vajratārā dislodged from a monolithic stūpa; 9 inches high. 10th-11th century (copyright ASI).

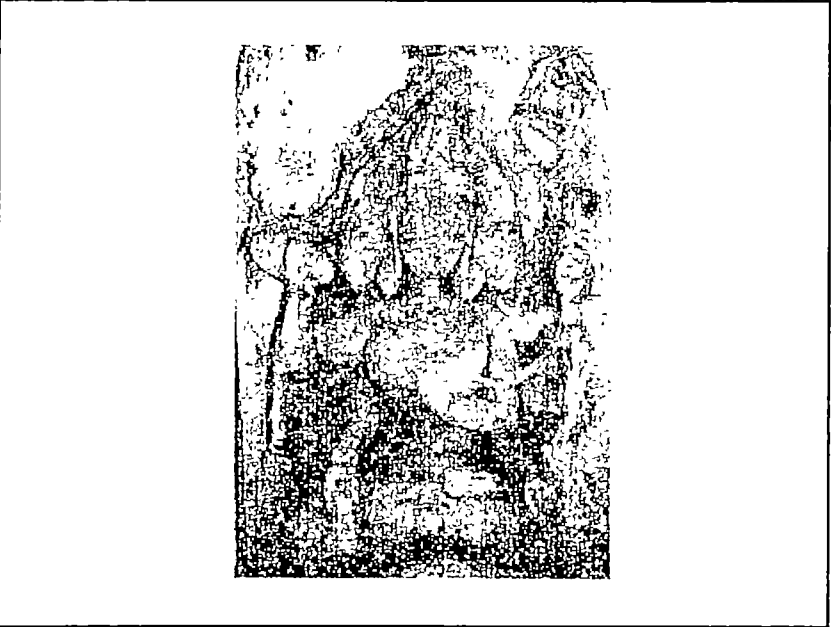


Fig. 8. Mukhalingam : Bhīmeśvarā temple; Vajratārā fixed to interior wall of antarala. 51 by 24 inches. Late 10th-11th century.



Fig. 9. Ayodhyā : Uttaresvara Mahādeva temple; Vajratārā with four female companions (pūjopakaraṇas). 32 by 16 inches. Late 10th-early 11th century.

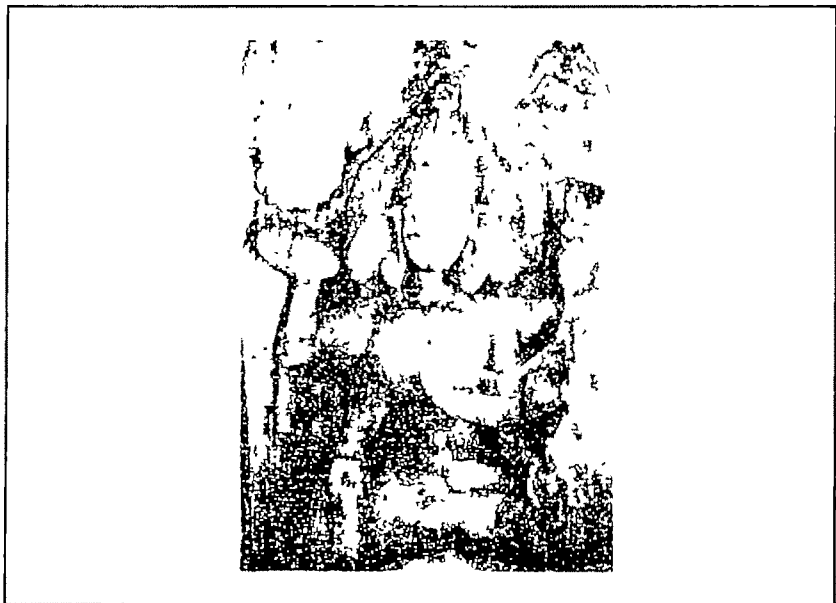


Fig. 10. Patharghata (Bhagalpur district, Bihar) : Vajratārā (bronze) from Vajratārā lotus maṇḍala (No. A 24364/4551). Circa 12 century (courtesy Indian Museum, Kolkata; copyright ASI).

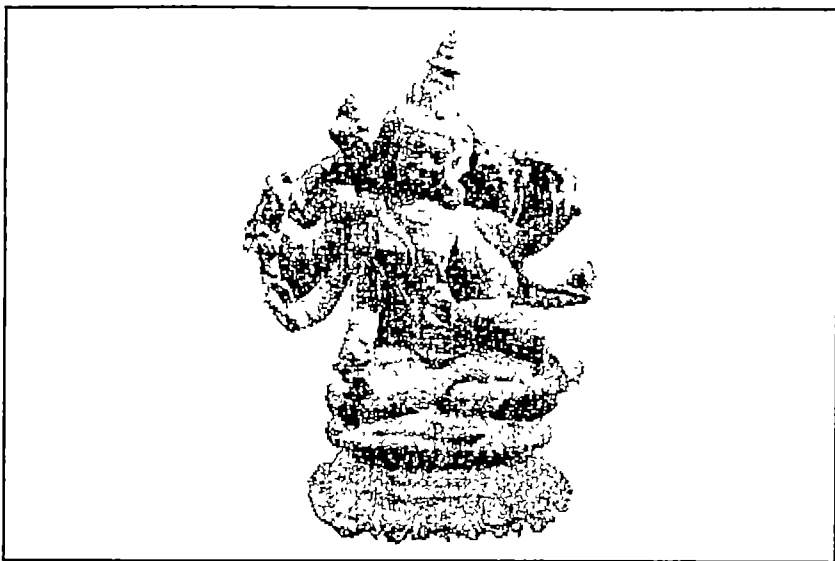


Fig. 11. Bihar, possibly Nālandā : Vajratārā with ten female companions; 39 1/2 by 23 1/2 inches. Late 11th-early 12th century (copyright Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection).

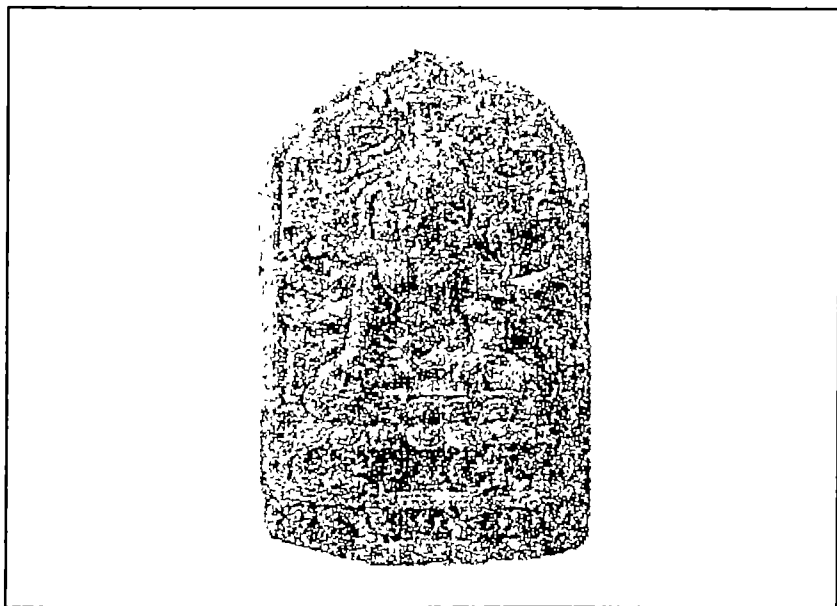


Fig. 12. Nepal : Vajratārā (bronze); 15th century (courtesy Indian Museum, Kolkata).



## BHADRA DEUL MOTIF IN PĀLA-SENA ART

Sudipa Bandyopadhyay \*

Representations of *deul* architecture appear abundantly in the art works of the Pāla-Sena period. They can be seen in works of art of different media : stone sculptures, manuscript paintings, wood carvings and terracottas. *Deul* motifs appear in art works of both Buddhist and Brahmanical inspiration. They are also not rare in Jaina art. While some of the specimens show the *deul* in its entirety consisting of its different components from the *pābhāga* upwards to the *mastaka*, the majority exhibit only the upper portion on the superstructure starting from mid-*gaṇḍī* upwards to the *mastaka*. Some display the *mastaka* along with a portion of *pīḍhas* or receding tiers and some the *mastaka* along with a *bisama*. Again, while some of the motifs of this category represent the broader aspects of the components, others are carved out in glyptic precision to create a comprehensive frontal view of the edifices concerned. Decorated with figurines, architectonic or floral designs of various descriptions, some of these motifs represent a microcosm of a real architectural built-up.

*Deul* architecture can be broadly classified into the following architectonic forms : (i) *Bhadra* or *pīḍha*, generally called *Drāviḍa* form of temple; (ii) *Rekha* or *Nāgara*, including *śikhara deul* with multiple projections; (iii) *Deul* of composite forms i.e. *stūpa-śīrsha bhadra deul* and *śikhara-śīrsha bhadra deul*; and (iv) *Chaityagarbha deul*. Of all the *deul* motifs represented in Pāla-Sena art, the *bhadra deul* motif deserves special mention because it appealed most to the imagination of the sculptors and artists of the period. Numerous stone sculptures, a fair number of manuscript paintings, specimens of wood carvings and terracottas amply bear this out.

### I

#### STONE SCULPTURES :

*Bhadra deul* motifs in stone exhibit only two principal parts, i.e. *gaṇḍī* and *mastaka*, along the vertical plane above the *bāḍa*. Of course, in some cases, a few of the upper *pīḍha* mouldings and the *mastaka* are visible. Another important and almost common feature

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of *bhadra deul* motif is that, unlike the successive *poṭalas* or *pīḍha* mouldings separated by a single *khaṇḍi* along the veritcal plane representing *pīḍhas* of later *deuls*, here every *pīḍha* or tier is separated from the other by a *khaṇḍi*. *Bhadra deul* motifs with multiple *ratha* projections are also not rare. Some such motifs show *triratha* and *pañcharatha* projections, while others are simple in constructional device. But in pigment the manuscript painters are more meticulous in representing the frontal view, sometimes with linear dimensions. The *bhadra deul* motifs in stone art idioms may further be classified into three types :

- (i) *bhadra deul* motif of simple formation
- (ii) *bhadra deul* motif of *triratha* projections
- (iii) *bhadra deul* motif of *pañcharatha* projections

Of the simple *bhadra deul* motif mention may be made of some images discovered from ancient Bengal. An eighth century stone image of **Sūrya from Kuldia**<sup>1</sup> in the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, shows the delineation of such a motif above the head of the deity. Here the *gaṇḍi* and *mastaka* portions of a *bhadra deul* are visible behind a trefoil arched *torāṇa*. Diminishing in a pyramidal shape the *pīḍha* mouldings of this motif are separated from each other by a number of well-proportioned *khaṇḍis*, the final one being surrounded by an *āmalaka*. Similar representations of simple *bhadra deul* motifs are seen in a number of sculptural art specimens of the period. Of these, an eleventh century stone image of **Umā-Maheśvara from Birol** (Plate : I), Rajshahi district of Bangladesh, now preserved in the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University and another ninth century image of same material of **Hṛṣikeśa from Sarengarh**<sup>2</sup> of Bankura district of West Bengal exhibited in the gallery of the Indian Museum deserve special mention. The only difference is that the image from Birol shows a more meticulous and majestic treatment of the *mastaka* with a prominently carved *āmalaka* and a *kalasa*, while that of Hṛṣikeśa exhibits decorated *pīḍha* mouldings. Simple *bhadra deul* motif is also met with in a number of Buddhist images of the period. An eleventh century stone image of **Ratnasambhava from Vikrampur**<sup>3</sup>, near Dhaka in Bangladesh, now housed in the Varendra Research Museum, and another eleventh century inscribed stone image of the **Buddha from Madhyapāḍā**,<sup>4</sup> Bangladesh, now preserved in the Bengladesh National Museum may be cited as examples. In both the images the relevant motifs show some sort of horizontal sub-mouldings of each *pīḍha*, both the

upper corners of which are carved out to form an extended type of vertically pointed edge of *karṇika*. However, in both the images the *pīṭha*s show a *pañcharatha* projection.

*Bhadra deul* motifs with *triratha* projections are also found in some of the stone images belonging to Pāla-Sena art idiom. In the *deul* of such motifs the *triratha* projections are not only visible in the superstructure, the *pīṭha* of the images also show identical *ratha* projections. A twelfth century stone *āliḡanamūrti* of **Umā-Maheśvara** from **Mahāsthānagarh**<sup>5</sup> and preserved in the Mahasthanagarh Museum, Bogra district in Bangladesh, shows the divine couple seated within a trefoiled arch, above which rises a temple with three diminishing tiers, the uppermost of which is surmounted by a well-developed *āmalaka*, crowned ultimately by a typical finial fashioned in accordance with the conical apex of the stele. In this motif the *pīḡha* mouldings of the *gaṇḡi* and the *pīṭha* are in *triratha* projections of which the central *ratha* covers much wider space than those of either sides. Even the *khaṇḡis* between the *pīḡha*-mouldings seem to have been formed of similar *ratha* projections. Interestingly enough, animal figures are seen in the *bhadra deul* motifs of the Buddha image from Madhyapāḡā and two icons of Umā-Maheśvara from Birol and Mahasthangarh like that of a sejant lion on the topmost tier below the *āmalaka*. This particular feature is deftly executed at the temples of Paraśurāmeśvara, Liṅgarāja and Rājārānī, all in Bhuvaneswar.<sup>6</sup>

Depiction of *bhadra deul* motif of *pañcharatha* variety is also found in some of the stone sculptural specimens of the time. A ninth century black stone image of Jaina Tīrthaṅkara **Chandraprabha** from **Bihar**<sup>7</sup> and now preserved in the Indian Museum depicts the Jina standing in *kāyotsarga* pose within a trefoil arched niche of an elaborately carved out replica of a *pañcharatha bhadra deul*; all the principal elements of this temple in miniature form are carved out in *pañcharatha* projections, and even the *khaṇḡi* between the tiered mouldings and the *mastaka* except the *āmalaka* have been fashioned accordingly. The *bāḡa* and *gaṇḡi* of this temple replica are profusely decorated with series of human figures of Jaina lineage. Another kindred example is a stone sculpture of **Pārśvanātha** from **Deulbhira**<sup>8</sup>, Bankura district of West Bengal. In this sculptural specimen also the Tīrthaṅkara is placed in a pillared niche of trefoil arch behind which the upper portion of the *gaṇḡi* and the *mastaka* of a *pañcharatha bhadra deul* is visible. The pedestal of the image is also carved out in similar *ratha* projections. In Brahmanical images depiction of *bhadra deul* motif of similar *ratha*

projection is also noticed. A stone **Sūrya** image from **Baria**,<sup>9</sup> Rajshahi district of Bangladesh, belonging to c. eleventh-twelfth century, shows the stylistic representation of the upper portion of *gaṇḍī* and *mastaka* of *pañcharatha bhadra deul* behind a majestic pillared niche of trefoil arch within which the God is seen standing. Here the frontal *ratha* projection is unusually wider than the *rathas* of either sides.

#### WOOD CARVINGS :

Examples of wood carving of the period delineating *bhadra deul* motif, though rare, are not altogether absent. The few that are available speak well of the excellence of the joiner's art of the time. *Bhadra deul* motifs in wood carvings of the relevant art idiom represent, similar to some of those carved out in stone, only the uppermost principal parts of the superstructure along the vertical plane. An eleventh-twelfth century relief of **Surasundarī recovered at North Kaji Kasba**, near Rampal, Dhaka<sup>10</sup> now in the Bangladesh National Museum carries a depiction of the upper portion of a *triratha bhadra deul* behind a trefoil arched niche within which the celestial damsel is seen standing; the *deul* motif of this shows six gradually diminishing tiered mouldings of the *gaṇḍī* of a *bhadra deul* surmounted by a *āmalaka* of decorated tiered mouldings crowned by a lotus-bud type finial.

#### MANUSCRIPT PAINTINGS :

In pigment, a number of manuscript illustrations of the period provide us with a glimpse of the architectonic varieties of the contemporary *bhadra deul* of Buddhist inspiration. In many instances they carry the depictions of the shrine along with the labels describing the divinity installed and the location of the shrine (e.g. **Chandradviṇe Bhagavatī Tārā, Puṇḍravardhane Trīṣaṇa-Buddha-Bhaṭṭarakāḥ** etc.). The painting titled **Puṇḍravardhane Trīṣaṇa-Buddha-Bhaṭṭarakāḥ** shows the architectural types of this order existing at that time in Eastern India. This has led some scholars to suggest that such representations of shrines are no products of painters' imagination.<sup>11</sup> Of late, a scholar has argued that these miniatures are helpful in forming an idea of the temple architecture of the time, but it unsafe to accept them as actual replicas of the shrines concerned.<sup>12</sup>

In pigment, the manuscript painters are more meticulous in representing the frontal view, sometimes with linear dimensions. The manuscript paintings carry in each case the front view of the edifice in question, but on occasions they give us an idea of its

ground plan too. The notable features of these *bhadra deuls* of different descriptions are : (i) In certain cases the tiered stages of the *gaṇḍī* of the temple look like a sloping roof similar to that of a hut in Bengal region with a single or duplication of such roofs (ii) In many cases the decorated *stūpa* replicas being accommodated at the corners of the tiered stages introduce further diversity in the skyline beside the *mastaka* in the central plane of elevation like some Brahmanical temples with miniature *śikhara* abounding the main one (iii) In some cases sectarian affiliation of the shrines is represented by such elements as *mastaka*-like *āmalaka* surmounted by a miniature *stūpa* finial, while in some others the *stūpa* or the *śikhara* forms a principal part of the structure in its plane of elevation leading to a composite form of architectural design which can not be classified simply as *bhadra deul*. In the latter cases the *śikhara* or *stūpa* or both surmounts the *pīḍha* moulding of different numbers including even a single one. This varied set of compositional elements, has led some scholars to classify these *bhadra deul* motifs as follows : (i) Tiered type surmounted by an *āmalaka* and/or finial --- *bhadra* (ii) Tiered type surmounted by *stūpa* ---- *stūpa-śīrsha bhadra* and (iii) Tiered type surmounted by *śikhara* --- *śikhara-śīrsha bhadra*. Only the first of the classified types, i.e. tiered type surmounted by *āmalaka* and/or finial known as *bhadra* comes under the purview of the present discussion. The other two i.e., *stūpa-śīrsha bhadra* and *śikhara-śīrsha bhadra* are left out of the discussion because they represent composite types.<sup>13</sup>

Manuscript illustrations of the period concerned reproducing *bhadra deul* motifs of pure formation are fairly large in numbers. Of these the paintings depicting the temples of **Mahattarī Tārā in Varendra**<sup>14</sup> and **Lokanātha of Chandragomin at Nalendra**<sup>15</sup> in the Cambridge University manuscript of *Ashṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* copied in Newar Samvat 135 corresponding to 1015 AD deserve attention. The pictorial representation of the former shows a three-tiered roof gradually diminishing at every stage surmounted by an *āmalaka* and a *stūpa* finial. A rectangular type of *bekī* below the *āmalaka* and two *khaṇḍī* between the tiered roof are distinctively visible. At the projected corners of the uppermost tier, figures of two sitting antelopes or bulls facing opposite directions are seen. In the latter, like the former one, the shrine is composed of a three-tiered roof headed by an *āmalaka* and *stūpa* finial. In both the cases the shrines are fronted by a three-lobed arch. But in the latter further transformation has been sought by providing replica *stūpa*-

crestings on either side of the corners of the third stage of tiered elevation by ensuring a diversification of the skyline. Further, the employment of floral design to decorate the tiered stages in both the shrines shows that the shrine architecture of the Pāla-Sena period was not devoid of artistic merit. Illustrations in pigment depicting similar type of *bhadra deul* are also available in another manuscript of the period. An illustrated manuscript of a late Mahāyāna text *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra*, assignable to Eastern India and to a date around 1100-1125 AD contains a fair number of illustrations depicting shrines of similar order.<sup>16</sup> The paintings illustrating the shrines of twelve-armed Lokeśvara, Lokeśvara with Tārā and Hayagrīva, and Tārā with Jāṅgulī and Ekajaṭā are some of the remarkable specimens of this type of shrine motif from the aforesaid text, now in the British Library.<sup>17</sup>

### TERRACOTTA :

Representation of a typical *bhadra deul* motif in terracotta art is extremely rare. A solitary instance is furnished by an inscribed ninth century terracotta sealing from Nalanda, now preserved in the Asutosh Museum.<sup>18</sup> In this work of art, an image of the Buddha in *bhūmiśpaśamudrā* is installed in a pillared pointed segmental arch above which the three-tiered *gaṇḍī* surmounted by *āmalaka* of the shrine is visible. But the peculiar feature of this tiered *gaṇḍī* is that it has not gained its elevation in diminishing stages. Of the three tiered stages, the central one is much wider than the other two, which are almost equal in expansion. Because of this departure from the usual architectonic formulation, the form of *bhadra deul* here instead of being pyramidal in shape, has achieved a hexagonal form in the upper plane of elevation.

## II

The *deul* architectural forms in the relevant motifs of Pāla-Sena art have affinities with art objects coming from adjacent regions and neighbouring countries. Of the different forms of *deul* motifs depicted in the art under consideration, *bhadra* surpasses others in number, and executed in different art media occurs well in quite a few specimens.

A bronze image of Vishṇu from Orissa of about thirteenth century, now preserved in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.,<sup>19</sup> shows a *bhadra deul* replica fronted by a trefoiled arched *Vidyādhara-toraṇa* surmounted by a heavy *āmalaka*; it enshrines the god within it. Replicas of another variety of *bhadra* shrine prominently figured in some of the Pāla style manuscript paintings

are also encountered in the sculptural repertoire of the neighbouring regions. In this type of *bhadra* shrine the tiered stages of the *gaṇḍī* of the temple look like sloping roof similar to that of a hut in Bengal region with a single or duplication of such roof. That the people of Orissa had occasionally demonstrated their predilection for this type of structure will be apparent from a panel from Konarak showing king Lakshmi-Narasimha Gaṇga (c. 1238-1246 AD) as an archer.<sup>20</sup> It depicts an architectural motif exhibiting multiple sloping roofs and three *kalasas* topping them. Another representative stone plaque from the same site, now in the Indian Museum, shows a similar type of superstructure of a temple assembly hall.<sup>21</sup> Both these specimens belong to the thirteenth century.

The art of Assam also exhibits similar *deul* motifs. An image of four-handed Gaṇeśa from Ambari<sup>22</sup> in the Guwahati town, now exhibited in the Assam State Museum, shows the upper portion of a *bhadra deul* surmounted by a heavy *āmalaka* and a finial. Another Assamese specimen of the tenth century from Bhismaknagar,<sup>23</sup> now preserved in Assam State Museum, exhibits a dancing figure along with musicians within a *bhadra deul* surmounted by an *āmalaka* and fronted by a trefoiled arch entrance. A similar motif can also be seen on a fragmented terracotta plaque preserved in the Assam State Museum.<sup>24</sup> It shows a seven hooded snake goddess seated under a *bhadra deul* with trefoiled arch capped by an *āmalaka*.

A number of terracotta plaques bearing exquisite details of architectural motifs have been found from Meghalaya. A four-handed seated Gaṇeśa from Bhaitbari<sup>25</sup> in Meghalaya shows a *bhadra-deul* with a trefoiled arch resting on two pillars; the *bhadra* is capped by a characteristic *āmalaka-śilā*. Motifs like *grīvā*, *khopuri* and *kalasa* also feature prominently in the plaque. Other fragmented plaques from the same site<sup>26</sup> also bear architectural motifs of a similar nature. The motifs used in these specimens not only bear resemblance to architectural motifs of Pāla-Sena art but also to features of contemporary Orissan temple architecture.

Motif consisting of edifice with double tiered sloping roof resting on hexagonal pillars on both sides is also of common sight in many of the art specimens, particularly in the paintings of the Pāla-Sena period. A black stone sculptured plaque of about thirteenth century AD, now in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, hailing from Nepal<sup>27</sup> shows this motif executed in high relief; in the building a teacher and his disciples are seen engaged in some sort of deliberation. Unlike many such prototypes in Pāla manuscript paintings, this Nepalese example

shows, the double tiered sloping roof in *triratha* projection. Not only Nepal, but ancient China and Indonesia too have bequeathed to us art objects carrying this type of *bhadra* architectonic form of single or multiple sloping roof or roofs. Some of the bas-reliefs on the east and south walls of Cave No. 6 of the Yungang grottoes in Dantong, Shanxi Province of China,<sup>28</sup> furnish the illustrative testimony. Assignable to fifth-sixth century AD, the lithic canvas of this cave bears an architectural motif representing a house with a single roof of sloping formation. Identical *bhadra deul* motif is also met with on a few bas-reliefs carved on the walls of the magnificent shrine of Borobudur at Java,<sup>29</sup> dated around eighth century AD. One of the bas-reliefs, while narrating the legend of the Buddha depicts the event of bestowing his ring on the maiden Gopā by the Prince Siddhārtha; the Prince has a group of maidens sitting on his right side and they are seen assembled in a hall with a double tiered roof of sloping variety.

In conclusion it may be mentioned that the depiction of *bhadra deul* motif in the Pāla-Sena art of the tenth-eleventh centuries took its inspiration from some model of the remote past, presumably some impoverished form of hut found in the Bengal region. The impressive number of art specimens executed in different media exhibiting such motifs indicate that this particular form of temple architecture was widely prevalent in Eastern India and adjoining regions during the period.

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### Glossary

*Ālīṅganamūrti* embraced images

*Āmalaka* fluted oblate spheroid, resembling an *āmalaka* fruit (fruit of Emblic mycobalan), crowning the top of the spire.

*Bāḍa* the term for the cubical portion of a temple upto pyramidal or curvilinear spire.

*Beki* cylindrical neckpart between the spire and the *āmalaka* of the temple.

*Bhadra/pīḍha* an order of structure characterised by a roof of receding steps; also known as *pīḍha-deul*.

*Bhūmisparśamudrā* the hand-pose in which the hand with the plam turned inward and the fingers extended downward touches the earth.

*Bisama* topmost course of the spire above the top *bhūmi-āmalaka* immediately below the *bekl*.

*Chaityagarbha* the womb of a *chaitya*.

*Deul* a sanctuary of a deity; sometimes it consists of a *bāḍa*, *gaṇḍi* and *mastaka*.

*Drāviḍa* generic name of South-Indian temple type.

*Gaṇḍi* curvilinear spire or pyramidal roof above the *bāḍa* and below the crowning *mastaka-śikhara*.

*Kalasa* inverted pitcher-shaped pot; member of the *mastaka* installed over the *āmalaka* as a finial for the *śikhara* of a temple.

*Karṇika* outermost segment of a temple.

*Kāyotsarga* the pose in which hands hang straight down the side of the body without the least bend in any of the limbs.

*Khaṇḍi* groove, chamfer, chase between two forms.

*Mastaka* crowning elements above the spire or *gaṇḍi*; on the *rekha deul* it consists of *beki*, *āmalaka*, *khapuri* and *kalasa*; on the *pīḍha* or *bhadra deul* it consists of *bekl*, *ghaṇṭā*, *beki-āmalaka*, *khapuri* and *kalasa*.

*Nāgara* generic name for North Indian temple-type.

*Pābhāga* division corresponding to the foot, set of three, four or five mouldings at the base of a temple (above *pishṭa* or pedestal).

*Pañcharatha* temple with five projecting *pagas* on each side of the *deul*.

*Pīṭha* base or plinth of the temple below the *pābhāga* mouldings.

*Poṭala* group of *pīḍhas*.

*Ratha* segments produced upon the face of temple by subjecting part of it to one or more projections.

*Rekha/Nāgara* order of temple characterised by a curvilinear spire which presents the appearance of a continuous line (*rekha*).

*Śikhara* the spire or tower over North Indian Hindu temple.

*Śikhara-śīrsha*

*bhadra deul bhadra deul* surmounted by the *śikhara*.

*Stūpa* originally a funeral mound or tumulus, but erected by the Buddhists either to enshrine a relic or to commemorate some sacred site.

*Stūpa-śirsha*

*bhadra deul bhadra deul* surmounted by the *stūpa*.

*Toraṇa* gateway; arch; entrance.

*Triratha* temple with three projecting *pagas* on each side of the *deul*.



Stone *Umā-Maheśvara* from Birol, Rajshahi, c. 11th century. Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Culcutta University.

## A NOTE ON SOME INTERESTING BUDDHIST SCULPTURES FROM UDAYGIRI, DISTRICT : JAJPUR, ORISSA

Bimal Bandyopadhyay

Udaygiri, lat 20°39' N, long 86°16' E is located at a distance of about 90 km from Bhubaneswar. Approach is obtained from Chandikhole, a junction in NH 5 from where through NH 5A i.e. express way to Paradeep, Krishnadaspur is reached. Taking the left hand metalled road from there Udaygiri can be reached falling at a distance of 12 km on way to Ratnagiri. A low range of hills starting from Jajpur covers the surroundings creating a picturesque background. Locally known as the Assia or Alti hills, the hills run in the south-eastern direction with spurs towards the west and the east. Towards its centre an open space is formed which meets the wide plains on the east, nearby rivulet Badaganguti joins Birupa providing navigable channel in ancient days.

Though the antiquarian remains of Udaygiri was made known to the academics as early in 1870 by the erudite work of C.S. Banerjee,<sup>1</sup> Deputy Magistrate, Jajpur exact significance and nature of them were not known to the world before 1985 when Excavation Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India started digging at the mound falling towards north-west direction of the protected area at Udaygiri naming it as Udaygiri-1. Continuous work for four field seasons laid bare the remains of a Buddhist centre consisting of a grand monastery, an impressive *stupa* and a walled residential-cum-shrine area.

Further excavation at Udaygiri has been taken up after a gap of about seven years. The area on a natural terrace by the side of the ancient well which was viewed as extremely potential for archaeological pursuits by the early explorers remained in obscurity under cover of thick jungle. In the winter of 1997 Excavation Branch at Bhubaneswar of the Archaeological Survey of India under direction of the author took up excavation there revealing in three consecutive seasons' work, a magnificent monastic complex, a shrine area and a water reservoir at the back side of the monastery. The site has been named as Udaygiri 2 and both the monastic centres at Udaygiri are datable to c. 8th to 12th century A.D. From inscribed sealings the name of the monastery at Udaygiri 1 has been known as Śrī Mādhavapura mahāvihāra<sup>2</sup> while the monastery at Udaygiri has been identified as Śrī Simhaprastha mahāvihāra.<sup>3</sup>

The monasteries at Udaygiri being important centres of Vajrayanism have yielded host of sculptures which are unique pieces of art and reveal rare and interesting attributes and features. Some of the sculptures which are discussed in this monograph will enable us to form an idea of the high aesthetic ideal and its reflection through the medium of stone.

To start with, the sculptures found at the *stūpa* in Udaygiri 1 can be taken up. Above the moulding at middle of the drum portion on four cardinal directions are pillared inset niches, each enshrined with a seated stone image of Buddhist deities. The beautifully carved images are interesting as they display unique iconographic features rarely noticed in the Buddhist art elsewhere. The image on the eastern niche (Plate. I) is seated in Padmāsana over a double petalled lotus displaying *bhūsparśa mudrā*, flying garland bearing Vidyādhara are on top corners of the back slab while on right side over a lotus stands a Bodhisattva holding a *chāmara* in the right hand placed downwards while a *nāgakeśara* leaf is held in his upraised left hand. The Bodhisattva on the left side also stands on a lotus holding a *chāmara* in upraised right hand and lotus stalk issues from his left hand placed downwards. The figure on the west (Plate-II) sits in the same manner while both the hands are placed in *dhyāna mudrā*. His attending Bodhisattva on the right holds a *chāmara* in the right arm, a full blown lotus stalk is held in the upraised left arm. The figure on the left of the deity holds a *chāmara* in the right arm held at shoulder level while an *utpala* over which a *vajra* is placed is held in the left arm.

Next image (Plate III) on the south shows *varada* in his right arm, attending deity on the right holds a *chāmara* in the right arm while a long sword placed over an *utpala* is held in the upraised left arm. The figure on the left of the deity holds a *chāmara* in the right arm held against chest while a full blown lotus issuing from its stalk is held in the left arm. The image in the north (Plate IV) differs with the other three in its hair style as instead of curly hair it has matted hair with locks falling over shoulders. A crown which has a triangular central part also decorates the head. He is attended by a Bodhisattva on the right side, whose downwardly placed right arm holds a *chāmara* while the upraised left arm holds an *utpala* over which is placed a manuscript. The figure on the left holds a *chāmara* in his right arm while a flower issuing from its long stalk is held in his left arm. The lower part of the pedestal of all the four images have two squat Nāga figures and creeper motif, flying garland bearing Vidyādhara on top corners of the stela of all the images.

The Buddhist creed is carved on the halo or back slab of the images in characters of the tenth century A.D. The images have been dated to the same period.

Though in the report<sup>4</sup> of the excavation these images have been mentioned as those of the Dhyānī Buddhas, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Vāk respectively placed in the east, south, west and north there are reasons to differ with the view. Three of the images can be identified as Buddha in different postures accompanied by Bodhisattvas. Thus the image on the eastern side represents Buddha in *bhūmiśparśa mudrā* accompanied by Maitreya on the right and Avalokiteśvara on the left.

The image on the western side represents Buddha in *dhyāna mudrā* accompanied by Avalokiteśvara on the right and Vajrapāṇi on the left while the image on the south represents the Master in the boon giving posture (*varada*) accompanied by Mañjuśrī on the right and Avalokiteśvara on the left respectively. This identification finds support in the account of R.P. Chanda<sup>5</sup> who states, 'like the southern part of the big terrace of Udaygiri, the northern part also is covered with numberless brick mounds. One of these mounds, called Itabhati or brick mound, represents a Buddhist stupa. In the four niches on four sides of this *stūpa* there were evidently installed four images of Buddha. A standing image of Buddha lies partially buried on the western side. There is a fine image of Buddha seated touching the earth on the eastern side (Plate IV, fig. 2). The type of old Nagari characters used in engraving the Buddhist creed on the back slab of this image indicates that it cannot be assigned to an earlier epoch than the tenth century A.D.' Besides, similar images of Buddha accompanied by *chāmara* bearing Bodhisattvas have been reported from Ratnagiri.

Now coming to the fourth sculpture reportedly enshrined on the northern niche it can be observed clearly that it differs considerably with the others. The deity is depicted seated in *vajraparyāṅkāsana* on the pericarp of a double petalled lotus with his hands held in *samādhi mudrā* attended by Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī on his right side and Avalokiteśvara on the left. Two images bearing partially cognate characteristic features with the main figure here have been reported from Ratnagiri identified tentatively as Dharmaśaṅkha-samādhi-Mañjuśrī (Amitābha-Mañjuśrī or Vāk) by D. Mitra.<sup>6</sup> It should, however be noted that the similarity lies only in the sitting posture and hair style and our image differs considerably in other details as it is devoid of ornaments excepting the crown while both the images from Ratnagiri are profusely ornamented.

Besides, in conformity with the three images from other sides the main figure is attended by *chāmara* bearing Bodhisattvas on both sides, Mañjuśrī on the right and Avalokiteśvara on the left, lower part of the pedestal also contains the usual kneeling two Nāgas on either side of the lotus stem. It is true that one of the above mentioned images from Ratnagiri has in its oblong back slab eight miniature figures of Bodhisattvas but their attributes and disposition vary considerably with the image from Udaygiri. According to the *Sādhana-mālā* Vāk should be decked in princely ornaments while the image under discussion is devoid of ornaments. Therefore we propose to identify this as an image of Buddha till further evidence comes to change this view. The tendency of the local artists towards non-adherence to canonical injunctions is also to be kept in mind while judging the figure.

All the four images now fixed in the niches of the *stūpa* are excellent works of art exhibiting graceful charm and sublime bliss.

A remarkable piece of early sculpture from Udaygiri though noticed by explorers earlier became obscured in the thick jungle growth at the natural terrace on the north-west side of the site. During the course of excavation at Udaygiri 2 this sculpture has been fully exposed. Chiselled on a single piece of stone the standing image of Avalokiteśvara (height 2.40 m) is a magnificent piece of sculpture even in its partially damaged condition (Plate V). Delineation of form displayed through soft contour of the body is reminiscent of the Gupta classicism in its eastern version already noticed in some of the earlier sculptures from Lalitgiri. The Bodhisattva standing erect with a slight bend of the body is four-armed, holding, right upper rosary, lower in *varada*, left upper water-pot and the stalk of a full blown lotus is held in the lower arm. He is princely ornamented and has an elaborate *jaṭāmukuta*, the centre of which is embellished with a figure of Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha. On top of the slab are seated seven Mānushī Buddhas inside beautifully carved niches. Below, on right corner, is seen headless Tārā in youthful form holding a lotus in one of her hands, the other hand is engaged in opening its petals. The male figure on left lower is fierce looking, dwarfish, wearing an animal skin. His front arms are placed against chest in a *mudrā* while the back right hand is upraised in the form of salutation, the lower left arm is placed below on top of a staff. This can be identified as an image of Hayagrīva. Decoration of the back slab is interesting because it is suggestive of a forest environment, as along with creepers, animals like elephant, monkey and even a lion peeping out of a cave are noticed. On the

back slab over the right arm a goddess is placed holding stem of a lotus in one arm, object in the other arm is indistinct. Over the left arm on a niche is placed another goddess on a lotus seat holding in front right *akṣhamālā*, the other arm is upraised in a *mudrā*. A lotus is placed on the left upper while a Kamaṇḍalu is on the lower arm resting on lap. On top of this figure on extreme left is placed a male figure in *mahārājaṭilāsana* whose left arm touches the seat while a lotus is held in the right arm. Three garland bearing lean and thin figures are noticed on the back slab below the row of the Mānushī Buddha. There is a twenty five line Nāgari inscription on back side of the slab now much defaced due to weathering. Chanda<sup>7</sup> states that the inscription opens with the Buddhist creed and evidently contains an extract from some text.

This partially damaged image of c. 8th century occupies a distinct place not only on stylistic consideration but also for understading the development of tantric Buddhism in Orissa. Excavation at the adjacent zone has revealed a shrine complex, one of the chambers of which perhaps enshrined this image. On the basis of our knowledge of evolution of Buddhism it is known that due to the added influence of Tantrayāna worship of a pantheon of gods and goddesses spread in Buddhism and various sects developed among the Mahayanists. One of the main centres of this tantric form of worship was Nalanda Mahāvihāra. The excavated antiquities at Ratnagiri throw a flood of light on the development of art and iconography where wide prevalance of little known tantric gods and goddesses are noticed in this part of Orissa. Later discoveries at Lalitgiri and Udaygiri have proved that this region served as a flourishing centre of Buddhist learning and culture with bases in the monasteries. Along with religious tenets art and architecture also reached to prime glory some remains of them making the viewer spell bound by sheer charm and elegance. Therefore, Ratnagiri, Udaygiri and Lalitgiri play a major role in the evolution and development of art in Orissa. *Sādhana* occupies a major place in the development of images according to the respective *dhyāna*. Freedom of artist is, however deterred by full adherence to canonical injunctions, therefore, sometimes liberty has been sought in creations of art. This is apparent through some images of this region like the figure of Avalokiteśvara discussed above which does not conform to the forms of the deity according to the text in its details. A good number of images found from Udaygiri and Ratnagiri bearing same attributes indicate that the form was very popular in this region. A recently discovered colossal image of Avalokiteśvara in khondolite (Plate VI) discovered during clearance



work at the foundation of the Dharma Mahākāla temple at Ratnagiri deserves special mention. This massive image (2.52×1.23×0.52 m) cut from a single block of stone is datable to c. 9th-10th century A.D. and exhibits excellent art form in its execution. Sahu<sup>8</sup> has been inclined to identify this form as *jatāmukha-lokeśvara*, one of the one hundred eight forms of Avalokiteśvara on the basis of the hand attributes. But in our opinion it can be identified as Avalokiteśvara in one of his forms emerging from the fancy of the master sculptors of Orissa, as there is no mention of the attending divinities of *Jatāmukha-Lokeśvara* in the text.

The discovery of two metal images at Udaygiri-2 while digging a drainage for rain water at the western outer side terrace after conclusion of the excavation for the season 1999-2000 is noteworthy. The badly corroded images, now after chemical treatment display excellent features and are the biggest metal images found from this region. One of them represents a standing image of Buddha (36×10×6 cm, Plate VII), two armed, showing *abhaya* in the right while the left arm is missing from elbow. It has strictly frontal pose, placed over a pedestal with the help of struts, pedestal badly broken and detached. Oval *prabhā* is raised above head marked with flame. The *prabhā* is also attached to the main figure with the help of struts. The other image (Plate VIII) is a standing male, two armed, both broken below elbow. Head is decorated by an elongated crown. This figure can be identified as a Bodhisattva. The image is detached from the pedestal, measures 30.5×6.5×3.5 cm. Even from their defaced condition the early features are discernible. On stylistic considerations they can be dated to c. 8th-9th century A.D.

During the course of excavation at Udaygiri-2 my attention was drawn to the rock-cut sculptures on the hill top adjacent to the site. Their existence though known to the scholars, details were not available except in the work of Sahu<sup>9</sup> in which he made sketchy observation. These sculptures are located on a hill-top towards south-west of the newly excavated monastery. The approach remained totally engulfed in thick jungle cover and was almost inaccessible due to location of the sculptures on a stiff cliff. However, during the course of excavation jungle was cleared and a pathway made. Known to local villagers as 'Solapuoma' these rock-cut sculptures depicting Buddha, Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and a Vajrayāna goddess were almost obliterated due to indiscriminate application of oil and vermilion. On cleaning it has been found that the sculptures are unique possessing excellent characteristic

features and physical charm. There are altogether five sculptures and an inscribed *stūpa*, from left to right they are, a standing Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, a standing Buddha, inscribed *stūpa*, a goddess seated over a *stūpa*, a standing Bodhisattva and the last one a seated Bodhisattva. The image of the goddess (Plate IX) is interesting. She sits on a *viśvapaḍma* in *lalitāsana*, is four-armed holding in right upper a flowery arrow (!), lower in *varada*, left upper holds a bow while left lower is placed on the pedestal from which stalk of a lotus emerges. She is beautifully ornamented, wearing bangle, armlet, necklace, waist band, ear stud etc. A bun shaped chignon serves as her head gear. The lower part of the pedestal contains elaborate offerings. The niche carved out of the rock on which the figure is placed contains in lower part, i.e. below the dangling foot of the goddess, the inscription and lotus stem at the extended part of which towards right side a seated male figure can be noticed while the left side is partially missing. An oval halo is behind the head of the goddess. The youthful body displays pervading sensuousness and the figure as a whole marks the excellence in figural grace and charm. There is a much defaced inscription of few lines below leg of the image which, according to Sahu,<sup>10</sup> contains dhāraṇī of Kurukullā. Annual Reports on Indian Epigraphy 1985-86<sup>11</sup> however, informs that the inscription seems to record some meritorious deed by a person (name lost) for the merit of his parents. However, the image can be identified with that of the tantric goddess Kurukullā whose worship endows the worshipper with the power of enchanting and subduing others. As this image differs considerably with the description contained in the *Sādhanaṁālā* in respect of Tārodbhava Kurukullā with whom Sahu proposes identification, it may be inferred that in this case also the artist took liberty from canonical injunctions and applied his fancy.

The other image of seated Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Plate X) is also interesting. The god, princely ornamented sits in *lalitāsana* over double petalled lotus placed on a stool, right hand displays *varada*, while left hand is placed on the pedestal from which the stalk of a lotus emerges. The matted hair has curly locks, facial part is much obliterated due to application of oil and vermillion, lower part of the pedestal contains offerings and auspicious objects. The most curious thing in this image is the depiction of thirteen seated figures in different postures placed above head and on both sides of the main figure. The composition is unique and no identification basing on texts has till been possible. This image also exhibits superb modelling and graceful charm.

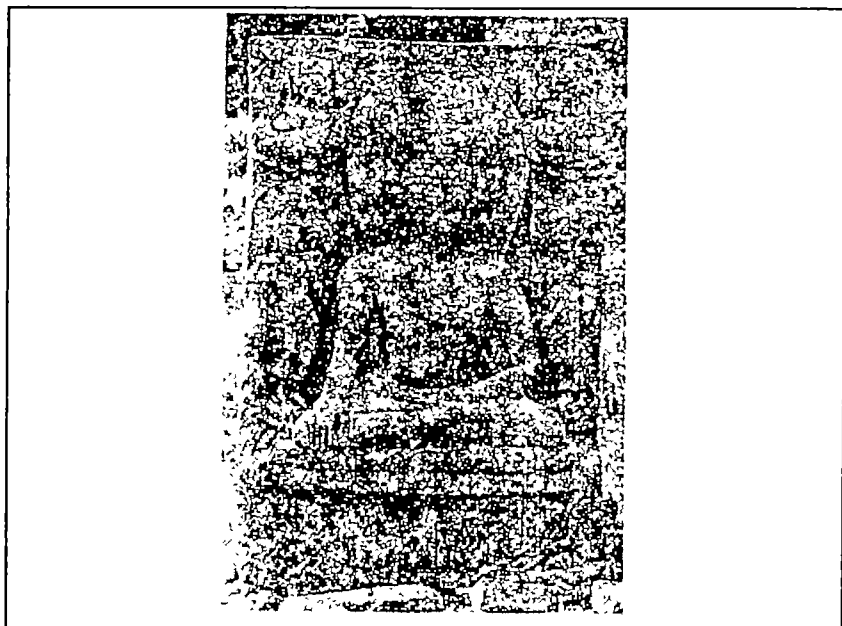


Plate : I



Plate : II

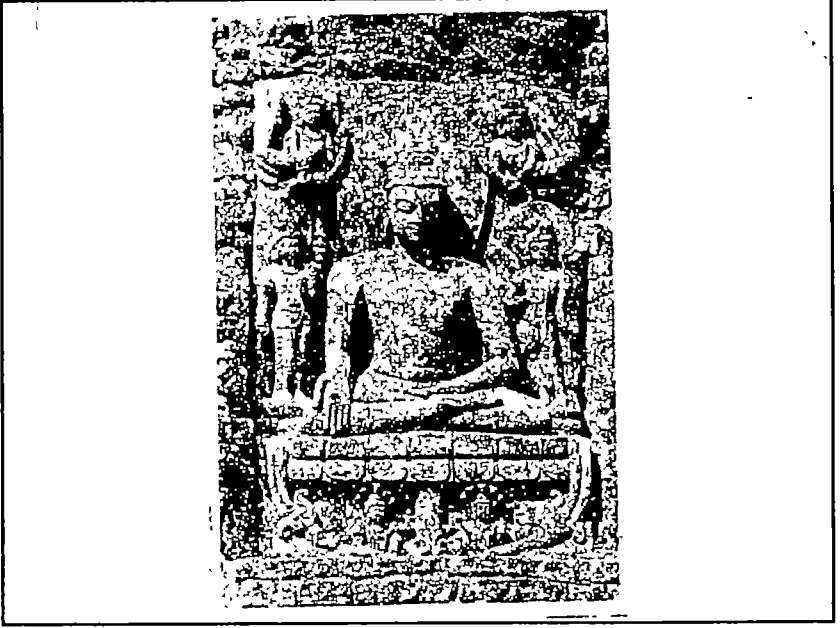


Plate : III

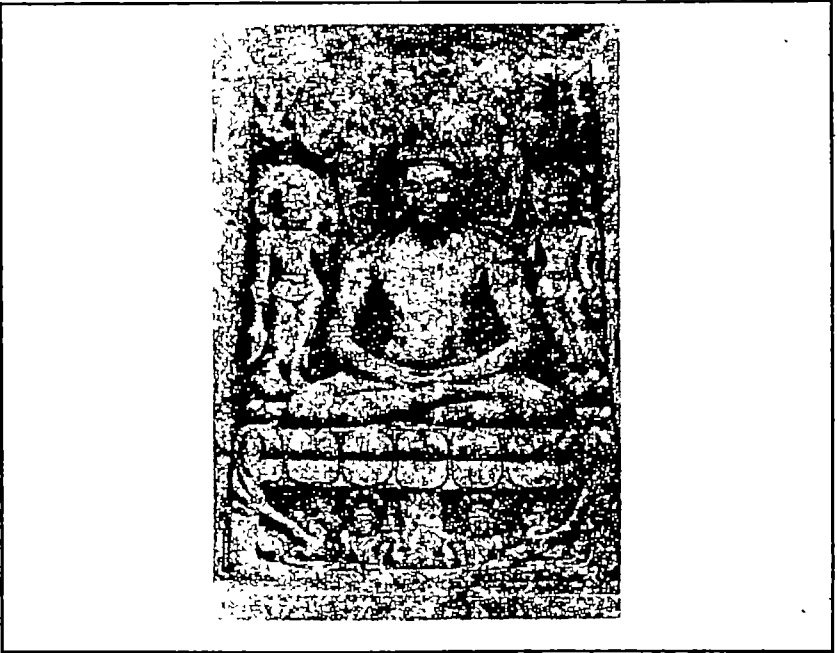


Plate : IV

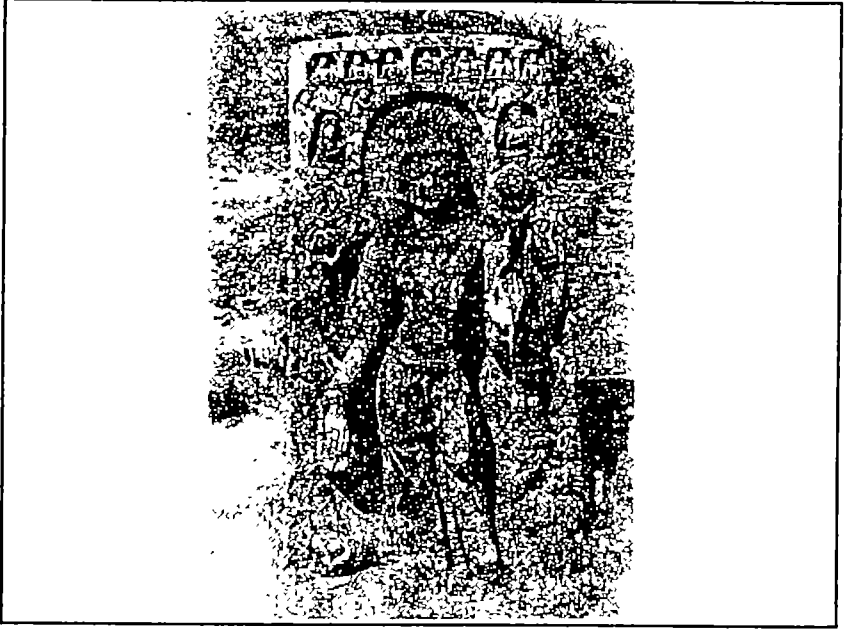


Plate : V



Plate : VI

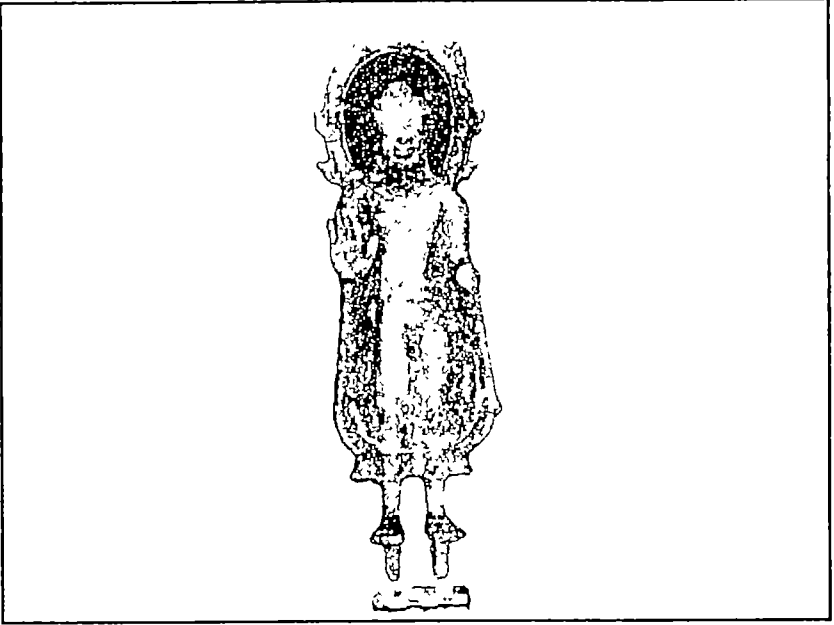


Plate : VII

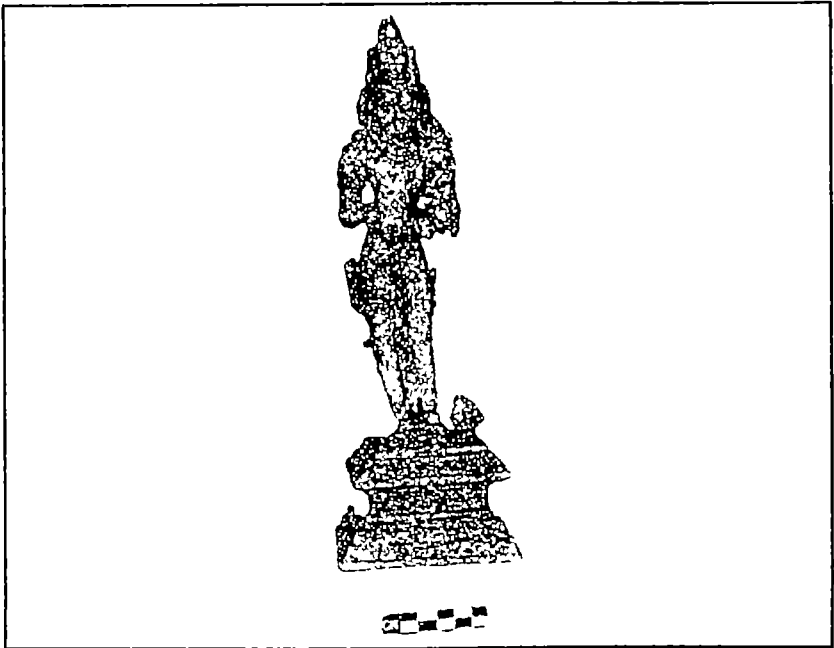


Plate : VIII



Plate : IX

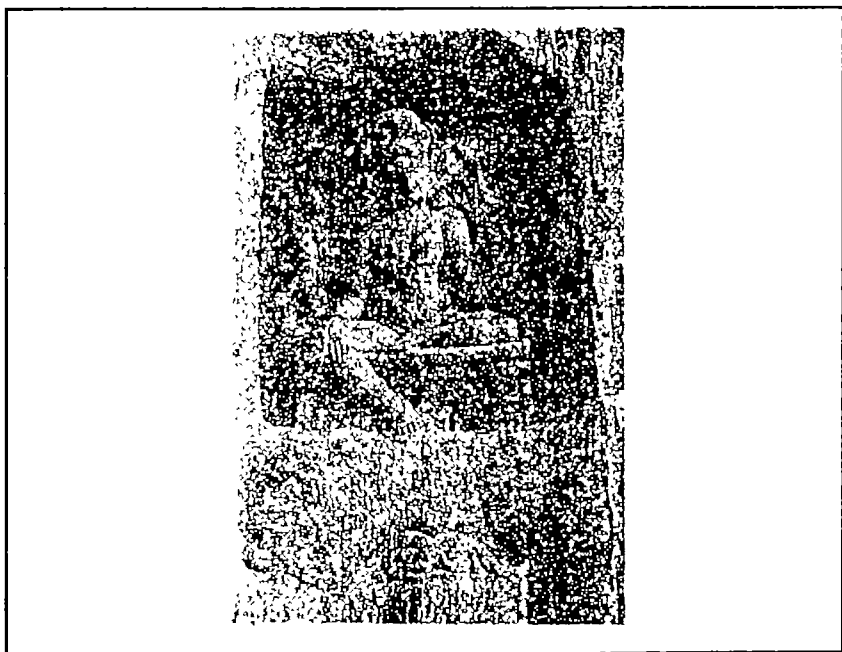


Plate : X

## **ORISSAN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE : FROM SUB-REGIONALISM TO REGIONALISM**

D. R. Das

The state of Orissa offers a unity notwithstanding the sub-regional diversity found here, and the aim of every great ruler of the land was to achieve this unity. When in 1936, the Oriya speaking tracts were put together to form the province of Orissa this age-old aspiration was translated into a permanent reality.

### **I**

The state of Orissa, as it is today, forms a part of the stable land mass of the Indian peninsula and is largely composed of some of the oldest rocks of the earth's crust. The topographical features of Orissa present a heterogeneous land made of (1) a sea-board, (2) a hilly sub-montane region and (3) a rugged hinterland, diversified by a succession of plateaux, uplands, hills and valleys.

From north to south, the sea-board is constituted by the Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts, each with a 'sub-montane backbone'.

The inner highlands comprise the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Angul, Phulbani, Boudh, Sonapur, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda and Sundargarh and extend north and north-westwards into the Chotanagpur plateau forming the water-shed of the Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarani rivers.

A different hill system of undulating uplifted plateaux of various heights, the Eastern Ghats, dominates the Nawapara, Balangir, Sonapur, Kalahandi, Nowrangpur, Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati, Ganjam, Boudh and Phulbani districts in the south-west of the state and extends further into peninsular India. From the Mahanadi to the Krishna, the Eastern Ghats run close and more or less parallel to the coast.

The Mahanadi, Baitarani and Brahmani are the three principal rivers of Orissa. The Mahanadi rises in the hills of M.P., enters Orissa between its two districts of Jharsuguda and Bargarh and flows through the state in a wide valley. Three-fourths of the drainage area of the Mahanadi is hilly. Its three chief tributaries, Ib, Ong and Tel, drain parts of the Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Nawapara, Kalahandi, Balangir, Sonapur and Boudh districts. The



Brahmani, rising in the Chotanagpur plateau, and the Baitarani, in the high hill ranges in the Keonjhar District, drain the north-western parts of the state before emptying into the Mahanadi. A few small rivers, in the mountainous southern parts of the state and flowing directly into the Bay of Bengal, include the Rushikulya, Bansadhara and Nagabali. All the rivers of Orissa are rain-fed and, therefore, carry a small volume of water except in the monsoon seasons.

The diverse physiographical features divide Orissa into a number of geographical regions. Among them, the lower Mahanadi valley, where life could be sustained with comparative ease, was and still is the heartland of Orissa. Naturally, therefore, it became the centre of political and cultural activities of the state.

## II

The historical period of Orissa begins with the mighty kingdom of Kaliṅga that had its capital at Tosali, generally taken to be a place somewhere near Dhauli in the outskirts of Bhubaneswar.<sup>1</sup> More or less a couple of centuries after its devastation by Aśoka, the Mahā meghavāhanas again transformed Kaliṅga into a powerful kingdom and established their capital at Kaliṅganagara, identified with Sisupalgrah in the vicinity of Bhubaneswar.<sup>2</sup> Though the territorial limit of Kaliṅga varied with the variation in the extent of the political authority of the houses, which ruled over this region in succession, it was primarily a coastal kingdom.<sup>3</sup> That during the Mauryan period, Kaliṅga extended from the lower valley of the Mahanadi to the Ganjam District and probably beyond is obvious. At the same time, the setting up of a second administrative centre at Samāpā, somewhere near Jaugada in the Ganjam District, by Aśoka expresses a realisation that the lower Mahanadi valley in central Orissa was geographically distinct from its south-western part.<sup>4</sup> That within the boundary of Kaliṅga, the region comprising parts of the Puri District and the districts of Ganjam and Gajapati was conceived as a separate territory is indicated by the charters of the Vighrahas who were sometimes described as rulers of Kaliṅgaraṣṭra or Tosala and found to have issued grants in Dakṣiṇa Tosala, i.e. south-west Orissa.<sup>5</sup> From about the close of the 5th century A.D., the rise of the Eastern Gaṅgas coincided with the shifting of the political centre of Kaliṅga to Kaliṅganagara which has been identified with Mukhalinagam in the Srikakulam District of Andhra Pradesh.<sup>6</sup> The Eastern Gaṅgas, enjoying the title *Sakalakaliṅgādhipati*, had their presiding deity installed on the

Mahendragiri in the Gajapati District<sup>7</sup>. During the early medieval period, it is only the kingdom of the Eastern Gaṅgas that was exclusively known as Kaliṅga.<sup>8</sup>

The transformation of the Nagavali-Bansadnara valley as the base of the political state of Kaliṅga underscored the region's own identity within a vaguely defined geo-cultural periphery. The older name Tosala/Tosalī continued to be used to refer to coastal Orissa but its territorial limit must have excluded that part which now came under the Eastern Gaṅgas. The Bhauma-Karas, who flourished between the 8th/9th and 10th/11th centuries A.D., were referred to as rulers of Tosala having Uttara and Dakṣiṇa divisions.<sup>9</sup> They are known to have extended their authority from Daṇḍabhukti *maṇḍala* to Koṅgoda *maṇḍala*, i.e. from Ganjam to Balasore-Midnapore region. To their contemporaries, like the Pālas of Bengal, the Bhauma-Kara kingdom was probably known as Utkala.<sup>10</sup> In the Chaurasi copper plate grant, Sivakaradeva II refers to his kingdom as Utkala.<sup>11</sup> That this kingdom was also known as Oḍra-Oḍraka is suggested by the records of the Rāṣtrakūṭas and Somavamsīs<sup>12</sup>. Utkala is an old geographical name referring to the country between Vaṅga and Kaliṅga.<sup>13</sup> Oḍra-Oḍraka was applied to the north-eastern coastal region of Orissa.<sup>14</sup> It is, therefore, inexplicable why Hiuen Tsang, visiting Orissa shortly after Saśāṅka's death, failed to recognise Utkala as a territory. In his travel account, Oḍra (Wu-cha) extended to Koṅgoda (Kan-yu-to) which bordered upon Kaliṅga (Ki-ling-kia).<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, the Paśupati temple inscription, dated about 757 A.D., refers to Harsadeva, the father of Rājyamati, queen of Nepal, as the lord of Gauḍa, Oḍra, Kaliṅga and (South) Kosala.<sup>16</sup> May be at that time Utkala was under the political domination of Oḍra or both were interchangeable names.<sup>17</sup> Whatever may be the reason, the supremacy of Utkala over Oḍra was established by the Bhauma-Karas, who claimed themselves as lords of Utkala and founded their capital at Guhadevapāṭaka (sometimes referred to as Guheśvarapāṭaka), a place considered to be identical with or near Jajpur (Jajpur District).<sup>18</sup> The Bhauma-Karas happened to be the earliest coastal power that was not confined to the coastal belt of Orissa. The content and distribution of inscriptions of the members of this family show that the Bhauma-Kara kingdom included extensive parts of the Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Angul, Boudh and Phulbani districts, besides the coastal and sub-coastal districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Jagatsingnpur, Cuttack, Khurda and Puri, and northern Ganjam.<sup>19</sup> Thus by pushing the frontier of the kingdom into the hilly sub-montane region and the rugged hinterland, the Bhauma-Karas manifested a consciousness about the geographical unity of Orissa.

The Somavarṁśīs came to where the Bhauma-Karas left. Presumably, descendants of the Pāṇḍuvarṁśīs of South Kosala, comprising Raipur-Bilaspur tracts, wherefrom they are supposed to have been expelled by the Kalacūris. The Somavarṁśīs established themselves in the Sambalpur-Balangir-Kalahandi region about or during the 10th century A.D. and made their newly founded kingdom known as (South) Kosala.<sup>20</sup> The Somavarṁśīs king Janamejaya Mahābhāvagupta I (c. 880/935-920/970 A.D.), describing himself as the king of Kosala, issued land grants from Suvarṇapura (mod. Sonepur, Sonepur District) and assumed the title Trikalīṅgādhipati of uncertain implication.<sup>21</sup> During the reign of his son and successor, Yayāti I Mahāśivagupta, (c. 920/970-955/1000 A.D.), the Somavarṁśī kingdom was found to have extended southward along the Mahanadi through the central belt at the cost of the Bhauma-Karas. He made land grants at Gandhaṭapāṭi (Gandharadi, Boudh District) and Candragrāma (Chandgaon in the Cuttack District) in Dakṣiṇa Tosala and in the Gaṇḍitama viṣaya in the Oḍra country.<sup>22</sup> Yayāti I, therefore enforced a political unification of Utkala-Oḍra and Kosala to become, as Panigrahi says, 'the father of modern Orissa'.<sup>23</sup> That in spite of their integration into one kingdom, these two regions were two geographical units was not forgotten. Thus in the Balijhar (Narsinghpur) copper plate grant of Udyotakeśari, Kosala and Utkala are mentioned as two separate *rāṣṭras* which Yayāti II Mahāśivagupta (c. 1022/1025-1040/1055 A.D.), grandson of Yayāti I's brother Vicitravīra, had united again under the Somavarṁśī rule.<sup>24</sup> Treading upon the footsteps of his grandfather's illustrious brother, he took upon himself the task of making Orissa a single state notwithstanding the individual identities of its regional segments. To achieve this end, he conquered Trikalīṅga by his own prowess and proclaimed himself the lord of Kalīṅga, Koṅgoda, Utkala and Kosala.<sup>25</sup> The power center of Orissa was now established at Yayātipura-Yayātinagara (mod. Jajpur), a name which became synonymous with Orissa in the Muslim chronicles.<sup>26</sup>

The pan-Orissan outlook, which took a definite shape under the Somavarṁśīs, inspired their successors, the Gaṅgas of Kalīṅga, to conceive this land as a single state. When Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga I (1073-1150) outsted Kaṇḍadeva sometime between 1112 and 1118 A.D., the Somavarṁśī had already lost their hold over Kosala.<sup>27</sup> Coḍagaṅga's endeavour to conquer the lost territories makes it abundantly clear that to the Gaṅgas, the Somavarṁśī kingdom was a unified geographical expression and the

victory over this dynasty was incomplete till Kosala was not included within their kingdom. Though Coḍagaṅga was unsuccessful, he sowed the seeds of the cultural integration of Orissa by constructing the famous temple of lord Puruṣottama-Jagannātha at Puri.<sup>28</sup> The dream of Coḍagaṅga to see Orissa as a single political and cultural region was realised by his grandson, Anaṅgabhīma III (1211-38 A.D.). He seems to have wrested Kosala from the Kalacūrīs and made his dominion the empire of Puruṣottama (Puruṣottama-samrājya).<sup>29</sup> Henceforth Jagannātha became the reigning king of Orissa and members of all later ruling families considered themselves as His subordinates. The territorial and cultural unity of Orissa was thus complete and the Puri-Cuttack area was recognised as the hub of all its activities.

What has so far been outlined was not in an endeavour to reconstruct the historical geography of Orissa but to sketch in brief the geographical history of the state. The purpose behind it is to seek the explanations of an aspect of the cultural configuration in this region.

### III

The foregoing may have established that Orissa was geographically and politically divided into three principal sub-regions, viz. Kalinga, Utkala-Oḍra and Kosala. How far the impact of this division was felt by the cultural activities of this land demands an examination. As architecture mirrors the cultural life of a people, a study of temples for this purpose may yield significant results.

About or during the 7th century, temples began to sprout at Bhubaneswar in the heart of Utkala to cater to the needs of the followers of Saivism.<sup>30</sup> According to the nomenclature, developed by the Oriya śilpīs, these temples belong to the *rekha* order.<sup>31</sup> The name implies that the temples of this order were characterised by an emphasis on linearism. In Indian canonical literature, these temples are ascribed to the *nāgara* category of which the two basic features are a cruciform groundplan and a curvilinear *śikhara*.<sup>32</sup> The earliest examples of this type, as represented by the Śatruḡneśvara group at Bhubaneswar, are not different, in respect of general plant and disposition, from their contemporaries in other parts of India. At the same time, they have already acquired certain regional features that can be identified in the delineation of the groundplan, treatment of the base mouldings, scheme of decorative

embellishments, form of *śikhara*, relative proportions of different parts of the structure and certain constructional features.<sup>33</sup> Regionalism became still more prominent in their successors, e.g. the Paraśurāmeśvara (*sic.* Pārāśareśvara) and the Svamājāleśvara, also at Bhubaneswar. Details of plan and elevation, constructional features and programme of wall decoration became in the main, conventional. There are parallels at several places, e.g. Rhoda in Gajarat, Osian in Rajasthan, Baijnath in M.P., Lakhamandal in U.P., Chamba in Himachal Pradesh and Aihole in Karnatak but Utkala temples maintain their own separate identity. The concentration of the early temples at Bhubaneswar in the lower Mahanadi valley is in keeping with the historical development of the land which was yet to be transformed into a unified state under the control of a central political authority.

About that period or a little earlier, the south-western border land of Orissa and its contiguous regions in Andhra Pradesh were consolidated into the kingdom of Kaliṅga under the Eastern Gaṅgas.<sup>34</sup> The temple style, the Gaṅgas developed at the beginning of their career, has been represented by three temples, two at Mukhalingam and one on the Mahendragiri.<sup>35</sup> Though belonging to the *rekha-nāgara* order, they constitute a class by themselves having no parallel outside Kaliṅga. Besides, the Gaṅgas also seem to have introduced, first as Nandī shrines and later as sub-shrines, a type of temple architecture which the *Bhubanapradīpa* classifies as *bhadra deula*. However, the Gaṅgas also adopted the Utkala *rekha* style and gave it a local version. Thus the corner shrines of the Madhukēśvara at Mukhalingam, while bearing a general resemblance with the early temples at Bhubaneswar, are not their duplicates. Through the execution of decorative details, iconography of divine figures on the wall, character of structural members and constructional device — both in respect of proportion and building—they assert their sub-regionalism.<sup>36</sup> This sub-regionalism became more and more assertive as the Gaṅgas went on giving Kaliṅga a definite geo-political definition. Temples at Sarapalli, Galavalli, Jayati and Narayanpuram in the Vizianagaram District, Mukhalingam and Sangam in the Srikakulam District (Andhra Pradesh), Padampur and Paikapara in the Rayagada District (Orissa) illustrate this assertion.<sup>37</sup> All these temples constitute a cognate group displaying identical plan, elevation, decorative pattern, arrangement and iconography of images on the wall. They include some such features, yet to be introduced to the temples of the lower Mahanadi valley, like the *navagraha* doorlintel,

division of the *śikhara* into more than five *bhūmi* stages, *gaṇa* figures upon the *śikhara*, 1 to 3 ratio of wall thickness and length-width of the *garbhagṛha*, mouse mount of Gaṇeśa, cock as an attribute of Kārttikeya and representation of Mahiṣāsura in anthropomorphic form. Of particular interest is the grouping and placement of *āvaraṇa devatās*. It was found that images of benign, composite and fearsome aspects of Śiva were grouped separately and fixed on three different sides of the temple.<sup>38</sup> *Pārśvadevatās*, viz. Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya and Devī, however, remained constant in Utkala and Kaliṅga but while Devī was in Mahiṣāsura-mardini form in Kaliṅga, she was in a placid form in the early temples of Utkala. That the *garbhagṛha* was not provided with more than one ceiling distinguishes the Kaliṅga variety from the Utkala examples. Bringing the lower frame of the *candraśālā* under the roof of the *mukhaśālā* is another characteristic of the Gaṅga-Kaliṅga style.

When a sub-style of Orissan *rekha* order was being evolved primarily in the Bansadhara-Nagabali valley, the Utkala country witnessed a temple building activity under the Bhauma-Karas. With the widening of the horizon of their kingdom, the Utkala style penetrated into the inner areas of Orissa. Thus temples, assigned to the Bhauma-Kara epoch, have been found at such places like Kandharpur in the Cuttack District, Kualo and Bajrakot in the Angul District and Khiching in the Mayurbhanj District.<sup>39</sup> Datable during the 8th-9th century A.D., the early Bhauma-Kara temples are indeed a largely modified versions of the 7th-8th century tradition of Bhubaneswar. Profusely ornamented by figural, vegetal and geometric sculptures, these temples retain the earlier *triratha* plan, *tri-aṅga bāḍa*, five *bhūmi* stages of the *śikhara*, double ceiling and rectangular *mukhaśālā*. Simultaneously, they revived the *in situ* carving of *āvaraṇa devatās* and chose Mahiṣāsura-mardini in preference to the placid form of Devī as the *pārśvadevī*. The rectangular plan of the *mukhaśālā* was not changed but in several instances, pillars for supporting the roof were dispensed with.<sup>40</sup> Iconography of the images adorning the wall was not substantially changed but the number of hands of Mahiṣāsura-mardini was increased and a schematic composition of the theme of Devī killing the buffalo demon was developed. The number of base mouldings increased from three to four in which the second and the third mouldings were combined by a foliage to simulate the *ghaṭa-pallava* motif. However, the second moulding, known as *noli*, did not as yet acquire the profile of a vase. The traditional *tri-aṅga* division of the wall, five *bhūmi* stages of the *śikhara*, absence of a

prominent *khapuri* from the *mastaka*, and *aṣṭagraha* on the door-lintel characterise all these temples.<sup>41</sup> While there was a constant regularity in the depiction of *pārsvadevatās* on the wall, the *ābaraṇa devatās* were not uniformly arranged. In this respect, a greater discipline was in force in Kalinga.<sup>42</sup> However, as in Kalinga, the Mahiṣāsuramardini form of Devī was given preference over her benign form. Temples built towards the close of the Bhauma-Kara epoch absorbed some Kalinga elements. Thus at Gopinathpur (Khurda District), the Simhanātha has the wall of its *mukhaśālā* embellished with sculptured niches in the same way as on the Madhukeśvara at Mukhalingam and the Pātāleśvara and Mallikādjuna at Paikapara. The lower part of the *candraśālā* is also brought under the roof of the *mukhaśālā*. The buffalo demon has acquired a completely human form. Besides, the subjection of decorative details under an overall restraint links this temple with those in Kalinga. The Liṅgarāja at Bhowanipur (Jagatsinghpur District) is another such example of this period. Its *kalāśa* finial may have come from Kalinga. The synthesis between the Gaṅga-Kalinga and Bhauma-Kara-Utkala styles of the Orissan *rekha* order is more manifest in the Nṛsimhanātha at Borogram (Ganjam District) than in other temples of the region. Here the scheme of adorning the body of the temple by divine images follows the Kalinga pattern. All such temples of the late Bhauma-Kara and Eastern Gaṅga period suffer from a mannerist treatment which is indicative of a sense of exhaustion of the creative impulses.

Orissan temple architecture, about to slide downward, was lifted again to a lofty height by the newly rising house of the Somavarṁśis in Kosala. Probably descendants of the Pāṇḍvārṁśis of Śrīpura (Sirpur, Raipur District, M.P.), they inherited and spread the rich architectural tradition of South Kosala as exemplified by some such temples like the Lakṣmaṇa and Rāmacandra at Sirpur, Rājīvalocana at Rajim and Indal and Sabarinārāyaṇa at Kharod.<sup>43</sup> The earliest Somavarṁśi temple in Orissan Kosala seems to be the Kosaleśvara at Baidyanath (Sonepur District).<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, its *baḍa deula* has collapsed long since but the extant *mukhaśālā* is instructive in many respect. Unlike the Kalinga-Utkala *mukhaśālās*, its is square on plan with projecting balconied windows at the flanks. It is extensively decorated both internally and externally by sculptures in *bas relief* and *alto relieve*. The entire conception is a novel one in the context of Orissan temple architecture. Until recently, the lintel of the door leading to the *garbhagṛha* of this temple bore a *navagraha* panel. In Utkala temples, the depiction of

the *aṣṭagraha* was to be found on that place. Much of what has been lost at Baidyanath is preserved at Charda (Balangir District).<sup>45</sup> Here the Kapileśvara, a duplicate of the Kosaleśvara, has the *baḍa deula* standing though much renovated. It is *pañcaratha* on plan. In its base mouldings, the *noli* has been replaced by the *kumbha*. The pilasters on the wall has on its upper end the minute *kīrtimukha* gorging bell on a long chain. The *rāhā* on the *śikhara* is relieved by interlacing *caltya* arches. The *pañcāyatana* Kosaleśvara at Subda (Balangir District) is stylistically akin to the Kapileśvara.<sup>46</sup> Proceeding further south, the type reached Paikapada (Raygada District), where the Pātāleśvara amalgamates the Kalinga tradition with the Kosala style.<sup>47</sup> Thus the temple has a portal recalling the Drāviḍa *gopuram* and a Nandī shrine hitherto uncommon in Orissa. In the Mallikāṛjuna, by its south, also the Nandi shrine is present. The panelled images on the mukhaśālās of both are Kalingan in respect of execution and iconography.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, the corner shrines of the former are in the Kosalan idiom as introduced by the Somavarṁśīs. The expansion of the Somavarṁśīs towards coastal Orissa along the Mahanadi brought the territory around Boudh under them. As a result was built the twin temples at Gandharadi. Though their *mukhaśālās* are in the later Bhauma-Kara style, their *baḍa deulas* are Kosalan in plan and embellishments. The snake-entwined pilasters and latticed windows were unknown in Orissa before the Somavarṁśī rule. The extermination of the Bhauma-Karas made the Somavarṁśīs the undisputed masters of Utkala, Kalinga and Kosala before the end of the 11th century A.D. It was followed by the shifting of the Somavarṁśī capital to Jajpur. As a result, the lower Mahanadi valley again resumed its dominating role in the political and cultural life in Orissa. Under royal patronage, Orissa, with its focal point at Tribhuhaneśvara, witnessed an unprecedented architectural activity, which thrived on the ground prepared by the Śailodbhavas and cultivated by the Bhauma-Karas. Assimilating Kalinga, Utkala and Kosala traditions, a new synthetic architectural style began to develop to make Orissan *rekha* temple a distinctly regional manifestation of Indian *nāgara* order. The identity of Orissa in geographical, political and cultural terms was now in the steady process of realisation. Under the Somavarṁśīs, Bhubaneswar became a veritable cauldron where Kalinga, Utkala and Kosala elements were mixed together to produce one of the finest varieties of the *nāgara* architecture. From Kalinga came such traits like the practice of gradual reduction of the wall thickness in relation to the



width-length of the *garbhagrha*, more than five *bhūmi* divisions of the *śikhara*, *gaṇa* figures on the summit of the *śikhara*, *kalaśa* as finial, *bhadra deula*, cock as an attribute of Kārttikeya, mouse as mount of Gaṇeśa and *dikpālas* as *āvaraṇa devatās*. Kosala contributed features like *pañcaratha* plan, *kumbha* in the *pābhāga*, *nāgastambhas*, latticed window, snake-tailed Ketu on the *graha* panel, execution of figure sculptures in *alto rilievo*, embellished interior of the *mukhaśālā* and *caitya* arch mesh on the *rāhā* of the *śikhara*. All these elements together with the existing ones in the Utkala country received in the hands of the Orissan builders an ingenuous treatment exemplified by such landmarks as the Mukteśvara, Brahmesvara and Rājārāṇi at Bhubaneswar. The age of experimentation came to its successful culmination when the stupendous pile of the Liṅgarāja was raised. To the future builders of Orissa, it became a model whose fundamental features were the *pañcaratha* plan, *pañcāṅga* division of the *bāḍa*, five moulding *pābhāga* composed of *khurā*, *kumbha*, *patā*, *kaṇi* and *khurā*, *dikpālas* on the wall, separation of the perpendicular wall section from the curvilinear *śikhara* by a set of this mouldings, almost perpendicular rise of the *śikhara* and its sudden inward curve near the peak, division of the *śikhara* into a number of *bhūmi* stages by round *bhūmi-āmalakas*, execution of the *kaṇika* of the *śikhara* into two horizontal planes, confinement of the *aṅgaśikharas* to the shaded corner of the *anuratha* and placement of them one upon another in a gradually reduced scale, decoration of the *rāhā* of the *śikhara* by an interlacing of *caitya* arches, projection of the *gajasīmha* from the body of the *śikhara*, *gaṇas* on the summit of the *rāhā-pagas*, indented capstone, composition of the *mastaka* with *beki*, *āmalaka*, *khapuri*, *kalaśa* and *dhvaja*, *navagraha* door lintel and multiple ceiling of the *garbhagrha*. In respect of the *mukhaśālā*, Orissan architects refused to accept the Kosalan peristyled *maṇḍapa* with balconied windows at the sides. Instead, they brought in the Kalinagan *bhadra deul* to serve as the *jagamohana* of the *baḍa deula*. However, the Kosalan practice of embellishing the interior of the *mukhaśālā* with various decorations, though not totally abandoned, was not favoured.<sup>49</sup> Like the *baḍa deula* it also had a *pañcaratha* plan and a *pañcāṅga* wall. *Nāgastambhas* and *dikpālas* adomed its wall. The *mastaka* on the pyramidal roof consisted of *beki*, *ghaṇṭā*, *āmalaka*, *khapuri*, *kalaśa* and *dhvaja*. A *prākāra* surrounded the entire temple area. An impressive portal, guarded by a *gajasīmha* on its either flank, punctuated the *prākāra*.

The foundation of the Gaṅga rule in Orissa by Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga sometime before 1118 A.D. was followed by an acceleration of the temple building movement in this region.<sup>50</sup> Coḍagaṅga is believed to have himself commissioned the construction of the great temple of Puruṣottama-Jagannāth at Puri.<sup>51</sup> Obviously, the model of this temple was the Liṅgarāja at Bhubaneswar. The Gaṅgas utilised the cult of Jagannātha as the most effective instrument for the cultural intergration of the people of a politically united state. Their declaration that the Gaṅga kingdom was the empire of Lord Jagannātha not only proclaimed His supremacy in Orissa but also made His temple the archetype of national architectural style of the land.<sup>52</sup> And Orissan temple architecture became truly Orissan in spirit and content.

### Glossary

**āmalaka** : spheroid ribbed at the edges.

**aṅga\*** : limb; taken here to denote segment of *bāda* along its vertical axis; *tri*-, three segments; *pañca*-, five segments.

**aṅgaśikhara** : miniature replica of temple on the *śikhara*.

**anuratha** : projected segment of the inner flank of *kaṇika* of a temple having more than three *rathas*.

**aṣṭagraha** : s. v. *graha*.

**āvaraṇadevatā\*** : divine image (distinguished here from the *pārśvadevatās*) on the temple wall.

**bāḍa** : wall.

**baḍa deula** : principal shrine.

**beki** : cylindrical neck of *mastaka*.

**bhadra deula** : temple with a pyramidal roof.

**bhūmi** : horizontal stage of *śikhara*.

**bhūmi-āmalaka** : sectional *āmalaka*, used to demarcated one *bhūmi* from another in the *kaṇika* of *śikhara*.

**caitya window** : ornamental design resembling the window of a Buddhist *caitya* hall.

**candraśālā** : large *caitya* window-shaped gable at the base of the *rāhā* of *śikhara*.

**deula** : temple.

**dhvaja** : finial.

**dikpālā** : guardian deity of a direction.

**gaṇa** : attendant of Śiva, usually presenting a grotesque look.

**gajasimha** : lion rampant on elephant.

garbhagṛha : santum sanctorum.  
 ghaṇṭā : bell-shaped member.  
 ghaṭa-pallava\* : vase and foliage.  
 gopuram\* : gate pavilion.  
 graha : planet; *aṣṭa*-, eight planets, *nava*-, nine planets.  
 jagamohana : s. v. *mukhaśālā*  
 kalāśa : pitcher-shaped member.  
 kaṇika : outermost segment of a temple with more than one *ratha*.  
 khapuri : skullcap-shaped member upon *āmalaka*.  
 khurā : hoof-shaped moulding.  
 kirtimukha : stylised lion-head motif.  
 kaṇi : moulding of the shape of V placed sideways.  
 kumbha : pot-shaped moulding.  
 maṇḍapa : s.v. *mukhaśālā*.  
 mukhaśālā : forward hall also known as *jagamohana* and *maṇḍapa*.  
 nāgara : type of temple with cruciform ground plan and curvilinear *śikhara*.  
 nāgastambha : snake entwined pillar or pillaster.  
 noli : moulding of convex semicircular profile.  
 navagraha : s.v. *graha*.  
 pābhāga : dado.  
 pañcāṅga\* : s.v. *aṅga*.  
 pañcaratha : s.v. *ratha*.  
 pañcāyatana : temple with a central shrine and four corner shrines.  
 pārśvadevatā, -devī : image of accessory deity occupying the central niche on the wall of a temple with whose presiding deity he or she is usually associated.  
 paṭā : square moulding.  
 prākāra\* : walled enclosure.  
 ratha, ratha-paga : segments produced upon the face of a temple by projecting part of it to a more forward plane; *tri*-, temple with the wall divided into three segments; *pañca*-, temple with the wall divided into five segments.  
 rekha : Orissan *nāgara* temple with accent on vertical line.  
 śikhara\* : towering roof (known in Orissa as *gaṇḍī*).  
 tri-aṅga\* : s.v. *aṅga*.  
 triratha : s.v. *ratha*.  
 \* Not found in Orissan canonical literature.

#### Notes and References :

1. Dhauli version of the Separate Rock Edict of Aśoka (ed. E. Hultzsch, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, abv. CII, Vol. I, Oxford 1925, pp. 92ff.) is addressed to the *Kumārāmātya* at Tosali D. C. Sircar

- (*Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, *abv. Geography*, Delhi, 1971, p. 167) identifies Tosali with Dhauli near Bhubaneswar. Debala Mitra (*Bhubaneswar*, New Delhi, 1966, p. 6) and J.K. Sahu (*Historical Geography of Orissa*, New Delhi, 1997, p. 118) take it to be Sisupalgarh in the neighbourhood of Bhubaneswar.
2. The Hathigumpha inscription of Khāravela, I.3. For the Hathigumpha inscription see D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilisation* (*abv. Select Inscriptions*), Vol. I, Calcutta, 1995, pp. 213ff. For the identification of Kaliṅganagara with Sisupalgarh see Mitra, *loc cit.*
  3. The Ningondi grant of Prabhañjanavarman (ed. by D.C. Sircar in *Epigraphia Indica*, *abv. El.* Vol. XXX, pp. 112ff.) proclaims that the Māthara Mahārāja Saktivarman, described as the lord of Kaliṅga (*Kāliṅgādhipati*) in his Rogulu plates (ed. by E. Hultzsch in *El.* Vol. XII, pp. 1ff.), was the ruler of the land between the Krishna and the Mahanadi. However, the Mātharas are not known to have ever extended their authority beyond the north-eastern boundary of the Ganjam District. As such the Mahanadi of the Ningondi grant appears to have been identical with a small river of the same name rather than with its greater namesake running through western and central Orissa (see Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. I New Delhi, 1997, p. 6.).
  4. The Jaugada version of the Separate Rock Edict of Aśoka (*CII*, Vol. I, pp. 115ff.) is addressed to the *Mahāmātra* at Samāpā. Sahu (*op. cit.*, p. 42) identifies Samāpā with Samma near Jaugada.
  5. In the Sumandala (near Khalikote, Ganjam District) plates of the (Gupta) year 250, *Mahārāja* Dharmrāja acknowledges Pṛthivivigraha, the lord of Kaliṅgrāṣṭra, as his sovereign (see. D.C. Sircar, 'Sumandala Plates of the time of Pṛthivivigraha, Gupta year 250, *El.* Vol. XXVIII, pp. 79ff.). The Kanas (Puri District) plate describes Lokavigraha as the ruler of Tosala (*id.*, 'Plate of Lokavigrahabhaṭṭāraka, Gupta Year 280, *El.* Vol. XXVIII, pp. 329ff.). For the territorial extent of the Vigraha kingdom see Tripathy, *op. cit.*, pp. 29ff.
  6. For the identification of Kaliṅganagar with Mukhalingam see Sahu, *op. cit.*, p. 433. The legendary account of the early rulers of the Greater Ganga family, given in the Vizagapatam copper plate grant of Anantavarman Coṭagaṅga, (Śaka) Samvat 1040 (ed. by F.F. Fleet in *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVIII, 1889, pp. 165ff.) credits Kāmārṇava (II), the third king of the house, with the erection of a temple of god Iśa in the *liṅga* form under the name of Madhukeśa at his capital Nagara (apparently Kaliṅganagara). C.V. Ramachandra Rao, *Administration and Society in Medieval Andhra (A.D. 1038-1538)*, under the Late Eastern Gaṅgas and Śūryavarṇa Gaṅgapatīs, Nellore, 1976, p. 116 refers to several epigraphs from Mukhalingam mentioning Madhukeśvara of Kaliṅganagara (cf. statements like *Trikaliṅgavāninagare Śrī Madhukeśvarāya, Kaliṅgavāninagare Śrī*

*Madhukeśvarāya* and *Kallīṅgavāninagare Śrīman Madhukeśvarāya*). The holy *līṅgam*, installed under the name of Madhukeśvara in an imposing temple at Mukhalingam, is undoubtedly the same god referred to in the Gaṅga and later records.

7. From the time of Hastivarman, the third king of the early family, the Eastern Gaṅgas almost continuously used the title *sakalakali-īṅgādhipati*. For the Gaṅga inscriptions see Satyanarayan Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa* (c. 600-1100 A.D.), Vol II, Bhubaneswar, 1960. Mahendragiri was the abode of lord Gokaṛṇeśvara Śiva, the family deity of the Eastern Gaṅgas. In the preamble of their charters, the Gaṅga monarchs salute Gokaṛṇeśvaraśevāmī on the Mahendragiri (see Ramachandra Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 53ff.).
8. See Sircar, *Geography*, p. 169.
9. See Sahu, *op. cit.*, pp. 124ff. Tosala as a two division entity is a pre-Bhauṃa-Kara concept. In the Asanpat (Keonjhar) Natarāja image inscription of Śatrubhaṅja (ed. by D.C. Sircar in *EI*, Vol. XL, pp. 121ff.; also Tripathy, *op. cit.*, pp. 171ff.) reference is made to Ūbhaya Tosala. The inscription is datable during the 6th century A.D. on paleographical ground.
10. F. Kielnom, 'Badal Pillar Inscription of the time of Nārāyaṇapāla,' *EI*, Vol. II, pp. 160ff. E. Hultzsch, 'Bhagalpur Copper plate of Nārāyaṇapāla,' Year 17, *IA*, Vol. XV, pp. 304ff.
11. Narayana Tripathy, 'Chaurasi Grant of Śivakara Deva,' *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* (abv. JBORS), Vol. XIV, pp. 292ff.
12. The Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda III, according to the Sanjan plates of Amoghavarṣa I, Śaka year 793 (ed. D.R. Bhandarkar, *EI*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 235ff.) conquered Oḍṛaka. For the Somavaṃśi charters referring to Oḍṛa see Sahu, *op. cit.*, pp. 115ff.
13. *Raghuvaṃśa*. IV. 38.
14. The earliest epigraphic reference to Oḍṛa is found in the Soro plates of Somadatta, Year 15. Somadatta, who as the vassal of Śaśāṅka was governing Daṇḍabhukti and Ūtkala (see R.C. Majumdar, 'Midnapore Plate of Śaśāṅka, Year, 19,' *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters*, 1945, pp. 3ff.), made a grant of land in the Sārephāhāra *viṣaya* within the Oḍṛa *viṣaya* of Ūttara Tosālī (see N.G. Majumdar, 'Four Copper Plates from Soro,' *EI*, Vol. XXIII, p. 202).
15. Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India* (A.D. 629-645), 2nd Indian ed., 1973, Vol. II, pp. 193ff. and 196ff.
16. The Paśupati Temple Stone-slab Inscription, dated in Samvat 159 (of Aṃśuvarman's era) and ascribable to about 754 A.D., refers to Harṣadeva, the father of Jayadeva (II)'s wife Rājyamatī, as *Gauḍoḍṛādikaliṅgakośalapati* (1.15). See Raniero Gnoli, *Nepalese Inscriptions in Gupta Characters*, Part I, Roma, 1956, inscription no. LXXXI, pp. 115ff.

17. In 795 A.D., the king of Odra (Wu-cha) sent an autographed manuscript to the Chinese emperor Te-tsaang (see Sylvain Levi, 'King Subhakara of Orissa,' *El*, Vol. XV, pp. 363f.).
18. Sircar, *Geography*, p. 178.
19. Sahu, *op. cit.* pp. 124ff.
20. Sahu, *op. cit.* pp. 101f.
21. For various interpretations of Trikalina see Sahu, *ibid.*, pp. 143ff; also Ramachandra Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 363ff; P. Acharya, 'Trilinga, Trikalina, Odra and Utkala,' *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Vol. I, pp. 73ff.
22. The Nibbina Plates of year 15 of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti I records a land grant in the Gandhatapāti, or Gaṇḍhadapāti *maṇḍala* in Kosala (Ajaya Mitra Sastri, *Inscriptions of the Śarabhapuṛiṇyas, Pāṇḍuvansins and Śūryavansins*, Part II, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 240ff.). His Cuttack copper plate charter of year 9 registers the grant of Cāndragrāma in Ḍakṣiṇa Tosali (J. F. Fleet, 'Kattack Copper-plate Grant of Mahā Śivagupta, Year 9,' *El*, Vol. II, p. 351). The Orissa State Museum Plates of the same king was issued on the occasion of a land grant in the Gaṇḍitama *viṣaya* within the Odra country (Mitra Shastri, *ibid.*, p. 220).
23. K.C. Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, Cuttack, 1981, p. 106.
24. Binayak Misra, 'Narasimpur Charter of Udyotakesari Mahābhāga-gupta IV,' *JBORS*, Vol. XVII, pp. 1ff
25. B.C. Majumder, 'Maranja-Mura Charter of Mahā Śivagupta,' *JBORS*, Vol. II, pp. 45ff.
26. For the identification of Yayātipura-Yayātinagara with Jajpur and the use of the latter name as synonymous with Orissa see Sircar, *Geography*, pp. 178ff.
27. The Komi plates of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga of the Śaka year 1034 clearly demonstrates that the Utkala country was undergoing a phase of political instability at the beginning of, if not even from sometime before, the 12th century A.D., and Coḍagaṅgadeva had to prop up the fallen fortunes of its lord (see G.V. Sitapati, 'The Komi Copper Plate Grants of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga, Second Set, Śaka Samvat 1034,' *Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society*, Vol. I, pp. 106ff.). However, by 1118 A.D., the Gaṅga monarch decorated himself with 'the rank of entire sovereignty over the whole of Utkala' (J. F. Fleet, 'Viṣagapatam Copper-plate Grant of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅgadeva, Śaka Samvat 1040,' *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVIII, 1889, pp. 165ff.).
28. Sircar, *Religious Life*, pp. 61ff. Panigrahi, *op. cit.*, p. 156.
29. For the literary and epigraphic references to Anaṅgabhiṃsa III's dedication of all his possession including the empire in favour of Lord Puruṣottama-Jagannātha and his rule as a feudatory of the said god

- see Sircar, *Religious Life*, pp. 63ff, also id., 'Bhubaneswar (Liṅgarāja Temple) Inscription of Anaṅgabhiṃśa III, Aṅka Year 34,' *EI*, Vol. XXX, pp. 17ff; Panigrahi, *op. cit.*, pp. 161ff.
30. Inscriptions on the planet slabs belonging to the Śatrughneśvara and Parasurāmeśvara temples at Bhubaneswar are in characters of the 7th century A.D. (Tripathy, *op. cit.*, p. 204. For A late 6th century A.D. date of the Śatrughneśvara temple inscription see K.C. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains of Bhubaneswar*, Bombay etc., 1961, p. 28). No earlier temple inscription has yet been discovered in Orissa.
  31. N.K. Bose, *Canons of Orissan Architecture*, Calcutta, 1932, pp. 78ff.
  32. After correlating the classification of temples in the śilpa texts with the extant monuments, S.K. Saraswati, ('Architecture,' in the *History and Culture of Indian People*, Vol. V : *The Struggle for Empire*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bombay, 1957, pp. 530f and 533) ascertains the fundamental characteristics of the two principal orders, viz. *nāgara* and *drāviḍa*, of Indian temple architecture.
  33. Segmentation of the *ratha* projections by offsets and recesses, heaviness of the base mouldings, scroll and motifs like lozenge-shaped four petalled flower, lotus petal and caitya window, besides asquaring a local characteristic, followed an incipient schematic pattern (see *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*, Vol. II, Part I : Plates, ed. Michael W. Meister, M.A. Dhaky and Krishna Deva, New Delhi and Princeton, 1986, Plates 512-29, 534, 537-39, 541-45, 547-53). Relative proportions of wall thickness and *garbhagṛha* length-width which was 1 to 1, fixing of the ratio of three vertical segments of the wall, viz. *pābhāga*, *jāṅgha* and *baraṇḍa*, at 2 to 4 to 1 and placement of the ceiling-slab upon a stone beam have seldom any parallel outside Orissa.
  34. The early Eastern Gangas, who used the title *sakalakaliṅgādhipati* (cf. f.n.7), began an era whose date of commencement has been placed around 496 A.D. The era seems to correspond to the date of accession of Indravarma I, the founder of the dynasty in Kaliṅga. for the Gaṅga era see D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, Delhi etc. 1965, pp. 289f.
  35. D.R. Das, 'Temples on the Mahendragiri,' *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, Vol. XIV, pp. 80ff.
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38. Ramesh, *ibid* , p. 295.
  39. Donaldson, *op. cit.*, pp. 112ff, 118ff., 180ff. and 229ff.; Debale Mitra, 'Bhauma-Karas', *EITA*, Vol. II, Part 2, ed. Michael W. Meister and M.A. Dhaky, Princeton and New Delhi, 1991, pp. 419ff.
  40. *E.g.*, the Śiśireśvara (Bhubaneswar) and the Māṇikeśvara (Sukleswar, Cuttack District), whose *mukhaśālās* are astylar.
  41. For the Bhauma-Kara temples, see Mitra, *op. cit.*, *EITA*, Vol. II, Part 2, pp. 490ff. and plates. Not all the temples, classified by Mitra as Bhauma-Kara, may belong to that period or should be identified with the manifestations of the stylistic idiom set within their realm.
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  48. D.R. Das, "Semi-care Shsines in Orissa", *Ratna-Chandrika*, ed. Devendra Handa and Ashvini Agrawal, New Delhi, 1989. pp. 291ff.
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## **CONCERN FOR ENVIRONMENT : AN EARLY INDIAN PERSPECTIVE**

Sukla Das

Study of ecology and environment is a comparatively young discipline which points at the interrelationship of organic matter and energy of living beings among themselves and with the nature.<sup>1</sup> Man's environment consists of air (atmosphere) water (hydrosphere) and land (lithosphere). All the resources available on this earth have their limits, over exploitation of which leads to environmental crisis in some form or other.

The term 'Oecologie' as coined by the German biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) in 1866 embraced the science of relations of living organisms to the external world, their habitat, customs, energy and parasites. With its distant echoes of the domestic household as the Greek word Oikos implied, ecology meant a family of living organisms each in close proximity to the other sharing the same physical space with conflicting appetites or complementary needs.<sup>2</sup>

With the growing importance of conservation of environmental factors the U.N. Conference of Human Environment in Stockholm was held in 1972 in order to draw attention of the world to the imminent global catastrophe due to pollution of environment and depletion of natural resources.<sup>3</sup>

The harm which sophisticated technology has done to the natural environment and the terrible ravages inflicted upon the biosphere have led to the extinction of many forms of life species and time is not far off when the existence of life would be impossible on the planet.<sup>4</sup> Naturally, ecological Salvation is the cry of the day which involves attitudinal change towards nature and readaptation thereto.<sup>5</sup>

It has emphatically been asserted that the view of nature as a resource is destroying nature as a human environment.<sup>6</sup> Depreciation of nature was the outcome of over exploitation by civilised life. Most of the human species now live within the man altered landscape<sup>7</sup> which amounts to ecological dominance of man and the resultant acute environmental crisis. Modern ecologists have begun to realise that eco-centric culture had an innate equipment for prolonged survival while techno-centric culture is doomed to perish<sup>8</sup> and in this context it is noteworthy that the early

Indian culture contains the most pertinent ecological lessons for today.<sup>9</sup>

The reputed Swiss anthropologist and zoologist Adolf Portmann maintains that man has an "inborn ecological sense"<sup>10</sup> hence environment awareness is not a recent phenomenon but an integral part of human culture ingrained in the philosophy and tradition of early civilisations. In fact man had to articulate a balance for perpetuation of life and existence and thus man had to establish a harmonious relationship with his environment. Indeed this provides a fast developing historical enquiry.

So far as the history of early India is concerned it is worth noting that the ancient Indian tradition established man's harmony with and veneration for nature. These values were subsequently diluted and eventually replaced by an indifferent attitude towards nature. Would a rediscovery and reestablishment of early Indian precepts help to surmount the present crisis is a big query as this can only be achieved by values, priorities and choice<sup>11</sup> yet they may enrich the present thought-process linked with preservation of our ecological viability.

A study of the early Indian view regarding environment and concern for it is thus highly rewarding but the subject being vast and the canvas short, one can however only touch on the fringes just to highlight certain distinctive features. A perusal of the Vedic literature with a biological ecological decoding key suggests that the principle of sanctity of life is clearly ingrained in it.<sup>12</sup> The Rg Vedic perspective of one is that which manifests in all<sup>13</sup> may be understood in contemporary ecological terms as everything is related to everything else. There is no sense of absolute superiority of man over nature. Throughout the Vedas we sense a deep respect for life. In fact an ecological wisdom is discernible in the Vedic texts.<sup>14</sup>

The Vedic premises pinpoint that mankind is not any alien species in this planet to dominate and exploit but an integral part of nature itself linked to the rest of creation by indissoluble bonds.<sup>15</sup> According to the Atharva Veda the earth is not for human kind only but for other creatures also and all have the same right to existence.<sup>16</sup> Development of sacredness of creation and sanctity of life principle are the basics to early Indian philosophy and culture. Consequently the early Indians did not consider human species as a detached entity to impose any greater value on human life than other forms of life. So they could develop a definite awareness for the environment in their social philosophy and life style.

The concept of mastery over nature as the "fulfilment of human destiny"<sup>17</sup> only reflects the arrogance of science and technology while the Vedas emphasise that the earth was revealed to mankind for joy<sup>18</sup> and in the light of this thoughtful attitude the thinkers had evolved a strategy to preserve the integrity and stability of the biotic community for a better life. The Vedic prayers project robust optimism for living and that too in the congenial environment. The Atharava Veda hymn runs thus, "Whatever I dig of you Oh Earth, may that grow quickly upon you. May my thrust never pierce thy vital points."<sup>19</sup> The moot point here is replenishment of what is consumed for human existence either by natural process or by artificial regeneration. The Vedic codes pinpoint that maintenance of environment is basically a material management bringing entire situation to a balanced state while meeting the demand as required.<sup>20</sup> In fact, the Vedas reflect a remarkable awareness of "primal ecology".<sup>21</sup>

From a critical study of the Vedic literature it becomes obvious that nature was the vital source of inspiration of the Vedic people. By nature we mean the sum total of the physical phenomena. We do not find the word Prakṛti in the Ṛg Veda to imply nature. Its early occurrence can be noted in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka<sup>22</sup> and subsequently it came in vogue. On the other hand we come across a recurrent term Ṛta which has multifarious interpretations like law of nature, cosmic law, inner balance of the physical world and moral law.<sup>23</sup> In spite of varied interpretations of the term Ṛta, one fact emerges that the term Ṛta stands for a law of cosmic equilibrium, violation of which is injurious to all components of nature. The early Indians, it appears, lived in close symbiosis with nature and in obedience to Ṛta, the natural law.<sup>24</sup> In fact an ecological psyche did develop in India from remote past.

In the Vedic hymns we notice wonder and reverence of man for natural forces by which he is encompassed. The Vedic deities though described in anthropomorphic terms are just natural phenomena.<sup>25</sup> The early Indian concept of Pañcamahābhūtas or five elements of existence Kṣiti<sup>26</sup> (Earth, Solid matter), Ap<sup>27</sup> (Water, liquid matter), Marūt<sup>28</sup> (Air, Subtle matter), Tej<sup>29</sup> (Fire, heat, energy) and Vyom<sup>30</sup> (Sky, ether, void) acknowledges the active and effective principle essential for creation, nourishment and sustenance.<sup>31</sup> The Atharva Veda prayer for making the Earth pleasant on every side<sup>32</sup> suggests that they wanted to enjoy life in its true perspective. They had exhibited their dependence on nature and hence did not treat nature as a self-contained system and a

resource to be ruthlessly exploited. The ethos thus embodied in the Vedas subsequently found fuller expression in the creative literature and in the classical works of Kālidāsa man is conceived in bold relief as a part and parcel of its natural dynamics.<sup>33</sup>

The early Indians had a profound respect and veneration for the natural world as they perceived the whole creation as the unfolding of the Supreme One into many.<sup>34</sup> Ecological status of an animal was recognised in early India. Of the five Mahāyajñas or Sacrifice to be performed by a householder, the Bhūtayajña was the most significant innovation that involved daily offering of food to animals, birds and other creatures<sup>35</sup> presumably to maintain an ecological balance. In the Yajur Veda we notice the warning that one should not kill animals helpful to all and by serving them one should attain happiness.<sup>36</sup> With the advent of the heterodox sects, protection of animal and vegetation was further emphasised. According to the Cakkavattisihanādasūta, the ideal king is expected to protect both social groups of people and Miga-Pakkhi or animals and birds which in this context might well refer to the animal population as a collective unit.<sup>37</sup>

For the sacredness and power attributed to animals they were regarded as manifest of divine essence of the Universe in material form. This led to the development of animal worship and the theory of incarnation or Avatāravāda where Kūrma (tortoise), Matsya (fish) or Varāha (boar) were but manifestations of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Divinity.<sup>38</sup> In fact the trend of associating animals and birds with the divinities was remote which gave rise to the concept of Vāhana or vehicle of the divinities and their sacredness.<sup>39</sup> Concept of Kāmadhenu, the cow which fulfills all desires represents ancient Indian values towards life in general.<sup>40</sup> All these conceptual developments emphasise the necessity of order and co-operation not elimination but preservation and growth of different species.

Vālmikī begins his epic Rāmāyaṇa with the immortal śloka on the unfortunate killing of a pair of krauñca birds by a ruthless hunter. His curse gives a broad hint to the damage done to the environment.<sup>41</sup> Hunter's role of aggression was in course of time deemphasised<sup>42</sup> and an attempt to set a tradition of controlled hunting was made by inclusion of hunting in the list of vices<sup>43</sup> and by employment of hunters for clearing wild animals from pasture lands.<sup>44</sup>

In India tree worship was probably the earliest and prevalent form of religion that may be predicated to the Vedas.<sup>45</sup> It was through

glorification of trees that man attempted to approach and propitiate the god. The concept of multiple utility of trees developed and the Rg Veda conceptualised Araṇyānī (Forest) as a deity who gives food without cultivation.<sup>46</sup> Glorification of trees with healing properties<sup>47</sup> and soma plant as invigorating force<sup>48</sup> in the Rg Veda forms an outstanding observation. The Rg Vedic prayer, may the plants, woods and mountains with their trees preserve us<sup>49</sup> gives a broad hint to the veneration of the vegetal world. The Vedic authors repeatedly offered prayers for making plants and herbs sweet and invigorating<sup>50</sup> and the Atharva Veda significantly calls the forest divine<sup>51</sup> and the Upanisadic thinkers also perceived god's existence in plants and trees.<sup>52</sup>

Buddhism adopted the cult of tree worship from the old tradition and according to the Buddhist legends, chief events in the life of Buddha – birth, enlightenment and Mahāparinirvāṇa were associated with trees and he received several gardens and groves from his lay followers.<sup>53</sup> All the twenty four Tirthaṅkaras are also closely associated with one tree or other.<sup>54</sup> In fact Jainism and Buddhism advocated a gentle and non-aggressive attitude towards nature and prudent use of resources. The model provided is that of a bee which collects honey without injuring the beauty and fragrance of flowers.<sup>55</sup>

The Vedic literature in its rural milieu and sylvan surrounding had developed certain theoretical ethos which persisted because of their inherent strength inspite of changes in the political, social and economic scenario. From the sixth century B.C. India witnessed second urbanisation with the Gaṅgā plains as the major centre of activities.<sup>56</sup> Introduction of iron must have played a significant role in clearing of forests<sup>57</sup> along with the process of burning<sup>58</sup> for expansion of agriculture. Second urbanisation definitely led to deforestation and ancillary changes.<sup>59</sup> Various narratives of the early Buddhist literature speak of crowded cities and expansion of settlements supported partially by archaeological evidence<sup>60</sup> which are indicative of demographic escalation.<sup>61</sup>

By the time of the Mauryas, Urbanisation was significantly pronounced<sup>62</sup> as can be gleaned from multiple source materials pertaining to this period.<sup>63</sup> The massive deforestation that preceded the establishment of large scale settlements under the Mauryas and biotic interference of over-grazing resulting in the denudation of natural vegetal cover<sup>64</sup> and the widespread use of iron that not only galvanised the clearing process but also improved the hunting strategy<sup>65</sup> did constitute a vicious circle leading to an ecological

crisis. The changing land-forest ratio might have had an adverse effect and it appears that Kauṭilya was growing apprehensive of balance that ensued through urbanisation. Consequently an increasing social awareness for the need of readjustment through the formulation of environmental ethics was called for.<sup>66</sup> There is extensive evidence in the Arthaśāstra on Kauṭilya's concern for preservation of forest<sup>67</sup> and wild life<sup>68</sup> and his recommendation of punishment for destroying trees and plants except in times of calamities<sup>69</sup> and killing of animals<sup>70</sup> may be viewed from this perspective. Wild life sanctuaries or Abhayāraṇya envisaged by Kauṭilya<sup>71</sup> points to his concern for the preservation of diverse species of flora and fauna to prevent extinction of any on account of expansion of human habitation.

Kauṭilyan strategies for preservation of forests and wild life attained a new dimension during the reign of Aśoka. He undertook an extensive programme to safeguard the environment through public proclamations. He not only regulated clearance of forest by ban on wanton burning<sup>72</sup> but also encouraged re-forestation<sup>73</sup> and induction of avenues decorated with shade trees.<sup>74</sup> The Aśokan edicts indicate that hunting was being discouraged<sup>75</sup> and restrained behaviour towards living being was emphasised.<sup>76</sup>

In the Maurya forest policy a new paradigm of mundanity can be deciphered.<sup>77</sup> Here no religiosity is imposed on trees and animals as in the Vedic texts or subsequent literature of the Purāṇas. On the other hand a new perspective of concern for preservation of nature and environment emerged out of pragmatic considerations. In fact a cursory glance into the Environmental Acts framed in India in recent past<sup>78</sup> highlights a striking similarity with forms and contents of the Arthaśāstra.

Concern for ecological balance eventually altered the nature of post-Maurya art. The post-Maurya Madhyadeśa School of art did not represent man in an isolated manner but coordinated human figures as part of nature with animal and vegetal motifs in one continuous stream of life just to highlight that everything is related to everything else or man's involvement in the universal order.<sup>79</sup> Even in the period of high urbanism under the Kuṣāṇas, we notice how emphatically trees were represented in sculptural art. In the Bacchanalian groups of sculpture the intoxicated human figures reveal distinct urban traits<sup>80</sup> while presence of drooping branches of trees with flowers and foliage highlight importance of nature in urban environment too.<sup>81</sup> In fact animal world and the cult of tree dominate the early Indian art and coins and some of the

motifs became a recurrent feature to be adopted in subsequent phases.

The vast mass of Purāṇic literature helped to expand the concern for environment, flora and fauna or the tradition of eco-friendliness. The Purāṇas conceptualised the trees to feel happiness and sorrow<sup>82</sup> which was scientifically established by Jagadish Chandra Bose centuries later. The Purāṇas attributed auspiciousness to plantation of trees.<sup>83</sup> A tree is said to render to a sonless person the virtue of having a son.<sup>84</sup> Attribution of religiosity to plant preservation indicates induction of a device by the early Indian thinkers for maintaining ecological balance. In the Purāṇic texts trees are held sacred<sup>85</sup> and various devices are resorted to perpetuate greenery. They uphold divinity of plants,<sup>86</sup> enjoin tree plantation and nurturing of plants,<sup>87</sup> present the concept of Taruputraka or adoption of trees like children and consider tree lovers as excellent Bhāgavatas and condemn wanton destruction of trees.<sup>88</sup> Thus the Purāṇas which were intended to be broad-based and designated as the Vedas of the commoners played a significant role in propagating a cultural heritage that was strongly influenced by the concern for nature, environment and quality of life.

Early Indian attitude towards nature projects a conglomeration of spiritual and philosophical thinking as well as social awareness and environmental ethics. As dependence on nature was given prime importance, they thought about the way nature could be protected from destruction and environment be made free of pollution. So while framing other norms of life they tried to formulate some principles to make the society conscious about the adverse effects of pollution and thereby not to disturb eco-balance. Genesis of this awareness may be traced to remote antiquity. Since the times of Indus culture phase they were aware of keeping water and air pure. They innovated highly developed drainage system, system of civic sanitation, wide streets, planned houses, bathrooms, wells, granaries to mention of few.<sup>89</sup> Subsequent texts on Vāstu Śāstra or architecture throw a flood of light on scientific planning as envisaged by the early thinkers.<sup>90</sup>

Site of residence was an important point and even Kautīlya<sup>91</sup> and Vātsyāyana,<sup>92</sup> two spokesmen of urban culture, recommended sylvan surrounding for residence and pinpointed importance of lakes, groves, gardens, hillocks to make a city worth living. This gave rise to a distinctly comprehensive science in ancient India, arboriculture which dealt in particular with the construction and maintenance of gardens and planned greenery.<sup>93</sup>

In order to surmount hazards of pollution, the Vedic texts put a bar on indiscriminate cutting of trees<sup>94</sup>, imposition of punishment of killing or doing harm to animals<sup>95</sup> and provided instructions not to pollute water with excrements.<sup>96</sup> Subsequently the Smṛti writers in their wide span of time framed enormous rules and regulations against activities detrimental to the quality of environment. Yājñvalkya grouped offence like cutting of branches of a tree or limb of beasts in the range of crime<sup>97</sup> and Kātyāyana considered it a serious offence that involved injury to trees, shrubs and creepers.<sup>98</sup> The Agni Purāṇa even prescribed death penalty for pollution of ponds.<sup>99</sup>

In the Caraka Saṁhitā, the classical text of Indian medicine we find the significant word Vikṛti for pollution<sup>100</sup> and this text warned people of the side-effects of natural disorders.<sup>101</sup> It specifically pinpoints that life-span of the living beings is dependent on co-ordination of the bioworld.<sup>102</sup> It propagates the concept of balance.<sup>103</sup> Surprisingly the text even speaks of sound pollution<sup>104</sup> and pollution through inhalation of irritant odour. The diseases generating from these pollutions are termed as Aindriyaka.<sup>105</sup>

To avert Vikṛti that invites multiple problems, early Indians had not only developed a high tradition of eco-friendliness but also a strong sense of hygiene. Ploughed fields, land with crops, public ways, banks of rivers, ponds and gardens were repeatedly requested to be kept clean.<sup>106</sup> In fact the early Indian legal genius best manifested itself in the laws regarding public health, sanitation and civic inconvenience.<sup>107</sup>

Early Indian wisdom indicates that eco-balance enhances quality of life. If we decode the Purāṇic myth of Samudra Manthana or churning of the ocean<sup>108</sup> we find a warning emerging out of it. At the initial stage of churning, Kāmadhenu or desire yielding cow, Kalpavṛkṣa or wish fulfilling tree and Śrī-Lakṣmī, the goddess of abundance and prosperity appeared with a jar of nectar, elixir of life. This stimulated greed and extensive exploitation of the ocean followed bringing forth poison.<sup>109</sup> Outcome of over exploitation of nature has thus been finely illustrated.

Early Indians thus pondered ecological questions and they formulated the antecedents of ecological theory. Discipline, restraint, awareness of interrelatedness of the bio-world were propagated through daily routine, customs, rituals and myths.<sup>110</sup> The respect that they gave to each element that concerned their environment make them the better environmentalists in the light of present eco-crisis. With an inner reason and pragmatic balance they



endeavoured to reach a point of perfection and harmony though they were aware that it was not to be complete as man is finite but the Universe is infinite.

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84. Bhaviṣya Purāṇa, Madhyama Khaṇḍa. 1.10.37; Varāha Purāṇa, 170. 35-37.
85. Skanda Purāṇa, 6. 252-50.
86. Padma Purāṇa, Uttara Khaṇḍa 15.2. 42-43; Skanda Purāṇa, 6. 252-42.
87. Skanda Purāṇa, 5.3.26. 128-130.
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97. Yājñavalkya Smṛti, 2. 227ff.
98. Kātyāyana Smṛti, 793.
99. Agni Purāṇa, 162.
100. Caraka Saṁhita, Vimāna Sthāna 1.4, 3.20, 8.94.
101. Ibid. 3.2, 3.6.
102. Ibid. 3.21.
103. Ibid. 6.14.
104. Ibid. Śārīra Sthāna, 1. 118-119, 128.
105. Ibid. 1. 128.
106. Ibid. Sūtra Sthāna 8. 18; Suśruta Saṁhitā, Kalpa Sthāna 2; Viṣṇu Purāṇa, 3.11. 11-12.
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# **WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN THE MAURYA PERIOD**

Abhik Gupta and Suchandra Ghosh\*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Recent initiatives taken by the State to conserve wildlife perhaps date back about 130 years when the first National Park was established in Yellowstone in USA in 1872 (Dasmann, 1984). Such measures were taken to protect the forest and their wild denizens from the mounting human onslaught and thereby put a halt to the disappearance or decline of wildlife species. While it is true that the rate of man-induced extinction or decimation of wildlife populations has been greatly accelerated in the recent times, human colonization of previously uninhabited or thinly populated regions had led to habitat destruction and extinction of species, especially representatives of the megafauna, in the past as well (Wilson, 1988). In India, the dense forests of the Gangetic plains in North India were cleared for agricultural expansion, with attendant changes in the floristic and faunistic composition (Gadgil and Guha, 1992). As this region was ruled by successive large empires having a well-organized state machinery, it is therefore of interest to know whether the State took cognition of the pressures of hunting and habitat alterations on the wildlife populations, and adopted appropriate measures to mitigate the adverse effects. The present paper attempts to show that the Maurya Empire (c. 324-187 B.C.) that had ruled large tracts of India extending from Afghanistan in the north to Karnataka in the south and Kathiawad (Gujarat) in the west to Kalinga (Orissa) in the east (Chakravarti, 1996) had indeed instituted concrete measures to protect wildlife that included creation of protected areas for in-situ (within the natural habitat) conservation, declaration of several animal taxa as protected under law, and devising ways and means for ex-situ (outside the natural habitat) conservation of plants and animals as well. Evidences for such a contention can be found in Kautilya's Arthaśāstra, a text written or compiled between the 3rd century B.C. and 2nd century A.D., although its earlier stratum (Book II, that contains the bulk of information on conservation practices) is believed to have been laid down during the 3rd century B.C. (Ghosh-Ray, 1994). Furthermore,

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the rock and pillar edicts of the Maurya emperor Aśoka (273/272 B.C. -236/235 B.C.) also proclaim the state policies towards conservation of wildlife.

### **SETTLEMENT ECOLOGY IN GANGA VALLEY**

While the major area of human settlement in Northern and Northwestern India in the early Vedic period (c. 1500-1000 B.C.) was in the valley of the Indus and its tributaries, during the later Vedic period (c. 1000-600 B.C.), it had shifted to the Upper Ganga Valley, and in the succeeding period (c. 600-400 B.C.) had further advanced into the middle Ganga Valley, with establishment of flourishing agricultural settlements (Chakravarti, 1996). Around this time, several prosperous states emerged in this area, and subsequently the Mauryas established a large empire around 324 B.C. Thus between 1000 to 300 B.C. or so, large tracts in the densely forested Ganga Valley were gradually cleared for agrarian development which attained a greater pace with the emergence of the vast Mauryan empire. Both Kautilya's Arthasāstra and Aśokan inscriptions give us an impression that the Mauryas established a well-managed state with great emphasis on agricultural, forest and livestock resources (Rangarajan, 1987; Chakravarti, 1996). Meanwhile, both land as well as livestock-man ratios underwent considerable changes during the period of colonization of the Ganga Valley. For instance, the Kanpur area in this valley had a density of only 0.75 persons per sq. km during c. 1350 B.C. (Lal, 1984). However, as the human population quadrupled during the next eight centuries of unbridled agricultural and pastoral growth, both land and livestock-man ratios must have declined drastically (Lal, 1984; Gadgil and Guha, 1992). When the Mauryas established their vast empire, they needed to have a rich agricultural resource base in order to support a large standing army and official machinery. Hence, the Maurya agrarian policy laid great stress on agricultural expansion (Chakravarti, 1996) leading to more clearing of forests and setting up of agriculturally productive rural units in hitherto uninhabited areas. People brought from other overpopulated areas of the empire were settled in these newly opened up areas. Such practices were bound to have increased the hunting pressure on the wildlife, coupled with a shrinking and degradation of their habitats. The merit of the Maurya policy lies in the fact that while expanding its resource base, it laid due emphasis on conservation as well.

### **TYPES OF PROTECTED AREAS AND MODES OF CONSERVATION**

Wildlife conservation in the Maurya period appears to have begun

before the time of Aśoka, as Book II of Kautilya Arthaśāstra (KAS) mentions several protection measures including both in-situ and ex-situ conservation, that is, conservation within and outside natural habitats, respectively, as summarized in Table 1.

## IN-SITU CONSERVATION

### PLANTS

As shown in Table I, several protected areas were earmarked for in-situ conservation of both plant and animal species. Of these, the produce or material forests (*dravyavana*) were natural forests earmarked for the conservation of one or more species of economically important plant species. KAS lists some 21 species of timber-yielding trees, 8 bamboos, 5 creepers, 6 fibre-yielding plants, plants used for making ropes, those plants whose leaves were of economic importance, those having beautiful flowers, as well as those having medicinal properties<sup>1</sup>. KAS recommended the conservation and sustainable harvesting of these plants from these produce forests that were protected by guards and looked after by the director of forest produce. Penalties were imposed for cutting or damaging these forests, except in times of distress.<sup>2</sup> Thus these forests were somewhat like the present day forest reserves. Separate factories for manufacturing different types of forest-based goods were also established under the supervision of the director.<sup>3</sup>

### ANIMALS

In-situ conservation of wild animals was ensured by earmarking areas of natural forest as *paśuvana* or game forests/sanctuaries. Binding, killing or injuring deer, other animals, birds and even fish in these forests were strictly prohibited and stiff fines were imposed on violators.<sup>4,5</sup> Furthermore, one-sixth of all birds, deer, etc., that were captured outside the protected areas, were to be released by the supervisor of animal slaughter into the protected areas.<sup>6</sup> This naturally ensured re-stocking and enrichment of wild animal populations inside sanctuaries. Animals that turned rogue were to be killed, if necessary, not inside the sanctuaries, but outside.<sup>7</sup> Thus a total ban on hunting of animals inside sanctuaries was enforced, like is done today inside the National Parks.

Besides *paśuvana*, separate forests termed *hastivana* (elephant forests) were meant for conservation of elephants.<sup>8</sup> These probably comprised large tracts of dense climax forests in the outlying areas of the empire, as elephants are known to require such habitats for maintaining a viable breeding population



(Sukumar, 1989). Elephant forests were guarded and monitored by a superintendent and his staff, who also charted its boundaries, routes and various landmarks like rivers, lakes, marshes and mountains.<sup>9</sup> Eight such elephant forests are known to have existed in India during this period (Trautmann, 1982; Ghosh-Ray, 1994). KAS also noted that of these forests, those located in Saurashtra and Pancanada had elephants of an inferior quality.<sup>10</sup> Today, elephants are no longer found in these areas. Hence, it is possible that the inferior quality of elephants from these forests reflected the habitat degradation that had started very early in these tracts of land. Kautilya also contradicted the earlier teachers who were of the opinion that between produce forests (*dravyavana*) and elephant forests, the former were more valuable, and instead asserted that the latter were far more precious, because produce forests could be created on various tracts of land, but not so elephant forests.<sup>11</sup> It is well-known that elephants require extensive areas of undisturbed climax forest for maintaining a viable breeding population (Sukumar, 1989). Such forests cannot be created artificially, but are the culminations of a long period of ecological succession. Hence they have to be conserved and maintained properly, a fact that Kautilya, and thereby the Mauryas seem to have realized. Of course, their recognition of the importance of elephant forests chiefly emanated from the importance of elephants as powerful war machines.<sup>12</sup>

Besides *paśuvana* and *hastivana*, other protected areas, such as those for birds (*pakshibāṭa*), and for rogue, fierce animals (*vyālabāṭa*), also find mention in KAS.<sup>13</sup>

## TOTAL PROTECTION

KAS also mentions the existence of three types of small forests (1 goruta = c. 3.66 km<sup>2</sup>), viz, *brahmaraṇya*, *somaraṇya* and *tapovana* to ascetics and priests for vedic study and 'soma' sacrifices. These forests where total protection was accorded to everything animate and inanimate,<sup>14</sup> were named after the 'gotra' name of the brahmins to whom these were awarded (Shamasastri, 1915), and are reminiscent of the sacred groves maintained by many tribes and other ethnic groups in India (Gadgil and Vartak, 1994). The assigning of gotra name is somewhat analogous to those sacred groves of Khasi Hills, Meghalaya, that are called 'Law Lyngdoh' (lyngdoh : priest). These forests are maintained by or under the control of priests (Syngai, 1999). Such practices obviously contributed to conservation and more prudent use of resources (Gadgil and Guha, 1992).

## EX-SIT CONSERVATION

### PLANTS

KAS mentions that it is possible to create many material forests (*dravyavana*) in many tracts of land. This perhaps implies that plantations—either monoculture or mixed—of commercially important species of plants were raised by the Mauryas. Another important example of ex-situ conservation of plants involved those having medicinal properties. An Aśokan edict in Dhauḷi in present-day Orissa proclaimed that medicinal herbs, fruit trees, roots and tubers were to be collected from the places where they naturally grew and transplanted in those places where they were not available (Gadgil and Guha, 1992). This practice of transplantation of medicinal plants and other useful herbs appears to have been initiated before Aśoka's time, as KAS advocated for planting of perfume-yielding and medicinal plants in the ridges or furrows between rows of crops (Shamasastri, 1915). KAS also recommended that those medicinal herbs that grew on marshy grounds were to be sown not only in grounds suitable for them, but also in pots (*sthalyam*) (Shamasastri, 1915). Thus the importance of conservation and propagation of medicinal plants was well-understood by the Mauryas and the Aśokan edict cited earlier proclaimed that medical attendance was to be made available to both man and animal (Gadgil and Guha, 1992). That such conservation practices reflected the ecological wisdom of the Mauryas is vindicated by the fact that the present-day scientists are sparing no effort to conserve medicinal plants outside their natural habitats wherever necessary, as they constitute valuable storehouses of a myriad chemicals, known as well as unknown to science, having curative properties against dreadful diseases.

### ANIMALS

Conservation of wild animals outside their natural habitats is best exemplified by the *Mṛgavanas* which were deer or animal parks that were stocked with tame deer, tiger, bison, elephants and their calves, and various birds.<sup>15</sup> These parks, although primarily meant for the king's recreation and sport, also served the dual role of ex-situ conservation in semi-natural enclosures.

### PROTECTED SPECIES OF ANIMALS

The list of protected fish, reptiles, birds, mammals and invertebrates provided in the KAS and in the pillar edict V of Aśoka (Basak, 1959) is given in Table 2. The list runs fairly long with more than 30

species or groups accorded protection. An attempt has been made in this paper to identify the animals listed. While some could be identified with a fair degree of certainty, reasoned guesses had to be made in the case of some others, while a few could not be identified at all. It may be seen from the list that birds, especially aquatic birds received maximum attention, possibly because of the high degree of hunting pressure on them. Of these, birds such as the swans (*Cygnus* spp.) are very rare nowadays, with only few records of their occurrence having been made in the 19th-20th century. The same can be said about the redbreasted goose which was recorded only thrice or so during the recent times. The Brahminy duck and the curlew are also winter visitors to India (Ali and Ripley, 1983). Thus great emphasis was laid on the protection of migratory birds, especially the aquatic species, and this probably stemmed from the realization that these birds may become very rare if the hunting pressure on them was not reduced. It is also interesting to find a bird of prey, the osprey, among the protected species, especially because this bird is not hunted for its flesh. Protection of top carnivores is given high priority today because they often serve as keystone species in the ecosystems. It may be too farfetched to assume that the KAS (or the Mauryas) possessed this ecological knowledge, nevertheless it is rather surprising to see a predatory bird included in the protected list. The peafowl was probably included not only for its gorgeous feathers, but also for its habit of killing and eating snakes, including poisonous species. Snakes were likely to be a menace in the settlements established in forest clearings as well as elsewhere in the Ganga valley and its adjoining areas. KAS therefore recommended a system of biological control methods for getting rid of snakes. For example, the harem of the king was to be protected from snakes by keeping cats, mongooses and peacocks. Furthermore, the changed behavioral patterns of several birds such as parrots, mynas, shrikes, herons, pheasants, partridges and cuckoos in the presence of snakes were noted in KAS and utilized for detecting the presence of snakes (Shamasastri, 1915). All these birds were naturally included in the list of protected species. It is difficult to ascertain the correctness of these behavioral observations, although it has been observed that the common Indian Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) exhibits changed behaviour patterns when confronted with a snake, and gives a raucous alarm call (Ali and Ripley, 1983).

It may also be seen from the table that among the species protected by Asoka, some are common to those listed in KAS, with

additional entries like rhinoceros, bats, pigeons and doves, tortoises, some fishes, and ants found on mango trees. Thus even some lower vertebrates and one invertebrate were brought under state protection.

### **MEASURES ADOPTED TO REDUCE ANIMAL SLAUGHTER/HUNTING**

Emperor Aśoka was probably the first ruler to take concrete steps to reduce animal slaughter and hunting, and he appears to have undertaken it in a phase wise manner. In the 11th year of the coronation, he promulgated the Law of Piety whereby he instructed his huntsmen and fishermen to stop or at least reduce hunting. He also drastically reduced the number of animals killed daily in the royal kitchen. In the 17th year, he started taking sterner measures like expelling those subjects who still indulged in killing of animals and fishes, and in the 27th year, he brought several animals under state protection. Among the other measures, prohibition of setting forests on fire to prevent death and injury to wildlife, and total prohibition on hunting and fish capture on certain days in different seasons, planting of trees, especially mango and banyan, and digging wells for the benefit of men and beasts, and undertaking *dhamma yata* (religious tours) to make contact with his subjects and instruct them on the precept of non-violence, deserve mention (Mukherjee, 1984).

### **ETHICAL APPROACHES TOWARDS WILDLIFE**

Ethical positions adopted in relation to nature and wildlife in the Maurya period ranged from anthropocentric or human-centred to various degrees of ecocentric or nature-oriented ones. In the former position, conservation was done purely to safeguard human interests. For instance, creation of *dravyavana*, *hastivana* and *mṛgavana* was mainly out of economic, military and recreational considerations, respectively. In contrast, the presence of *brahmaraṇya*, *somaraṇya* and *tapovana* where protection was accorded to everything animate and inanimate, mainly sprang from ecocentric or 'deep ecological' (Naess, 1973) considerations. Similarly, the precept of *anārambho prāṇānam* (abstention from slaughter of lives), and the inclusion of not only colourful and spectacular birds and animals, but other forms of life such as bats, fishes, porcupines, tortoises and ants in the protected list of animals reflect the true ecocentric ethics of Aśoka. Today, when we are losing one wildlife species every 20 minutes or so (Wilson, 1988), there is an urgent need for such a concept of *dhamma*, which

included “even the animal kingdom within the scope of its all embracing benevolence” (Mukherjee, 2000), to be recognized by human societies the world over.

End Notes :

1. R.P. Kangle (edited and translated). The Kautilya Arthasāstra (hereinafter KAS), Delhi, 1967, II. 17. 4-11.
2. KAS, II. 17.1,3.
3. KAS, II. 17. 2,17.
4. KAS, II. 2.4.
5. KAS, II. 26. 1,2.
6. KAS, II. 26. 4.
7. KAS, II. 26. 14.
8. KAS, II. 2.6.
9. KAS, II. 2.7.
10. KAS, II. 2.16.
11. KAS, VII. 11. 13-15.
12. KAS, II. 2. 13-14.
13. KAS, II. 6.
14. KAS, II. 2.2
15. KAS, II. 2.3.

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**Table 1. Types of protected areas and modes of conservation in the Maurya state.**

In-situ Conservation	Ex-situ Conservation
<i>Dravyavana</i> – Natural forests containing one or more economically important species of plants.	<i>Dravyavana</i> — Artificial plantations of one or more economically important species of plants.
<i>Pasuvana</i> – Wildlife sanctuaries where different species of wild animals were protected and conserved.	<i>Mrgavana</i> – Deer or animal parks where wildlife such as deer, elephant, various birds etc., was stocked. Chiefly meant for recreation and sport.
<i>Hastivana</i> – Climax forests having elephant populations.	Medicinal plants grown outside their natural habitats.
Bird sanctuaries (Paksibata) where different bird species were protected.	Medicinal plants grown in pots ( <i>sthalyam</i> ).
<i>Vyalabata</i> – forests meant for fierce, predatory or roush animals.	Medicinal as well perfume-yielding plants were grown in marginal furrows and/or ridges between rows of crops.
<i>Somaranya, Brahmaranya and Topovana</i> – Small areas of natural forest given to Brahmins. Total protection accorded to everything, animate or inanimate.	

Table 2. List of animals declared protected in Kautilya's Arthasastra (KAS) and Asokan Pillar Edict (PE) V<sup>1</sup>.

I. Protected animals common to KAS and PE V

1. Swan (*Cygnus* spp.).
2. Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficolis*) and/or Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*).
3. Parrots (*Psittacula* spp.).
4. Madansarika — Sterlings and Mynas, especially Indian Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) and Northern Hill Myna (*Gracula religiosa*).

II. Animals protected in KAS only

1. Krauncha — Herons (*Ardea* spp. and *Ardeola* spp.).
2. Chakravaka — Brahminy Duck (*Tadorna ferruginea*).
3. Indian Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus indica*).
4. Datyuha and Mattakokila — Cuckoo (*Clamator jacobinus serratus*), the Brainfever Bird (*Cuculus varius*), and Koel (*Eudynamys scolopacea*).
5. Jivanjivaka — likely to mean the Common Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*).
6. Cakora — Partidge (*Alectoris chukar chukar*).
7. Bhmgaraja — *Lanius malabaricus* according to Shamasastri (1915) but likely to mean the Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo.
8. Indian Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*).
9. Curlew (*Numenius arquata orientalis* and *N.a. arquata*).
10. Utkrosaka-Osprey (*Pandion heliaetus*).
11. Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*).
12. Various species of deer and antelope.
13. Sea fish having the form of elephant, horse, man, etc. (might have meant the Sea Horse *Hippocampus* and dolphins).

III. Animals protected in PE V only

1. Redbreasted birds, might have meant Himalayan Rubythroat (*Erithacus pectoralis*) or Rednecked Grebe (*Podiceps griselgena*), or Ruddy Crake (*Porzana fusca*).
2. Gangapuputaka-Watercock (*Gallicrex cinerea*).
3. Nandimukhas and gelatas-two unidentified waterfowl.

4. Vedaveyakas-an unidentified bird or animal.
  5. Grey pigeons-Indian Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia intermedia*) and/or Indian Stock Pigeon (*Columba eversmanni*).
  6. Village doves, e.g., Ring Dove (*Streptopalia decaocto decaocto*).
  7. Tortoises or turtles, e.g., *Kachuga* spp., *Aspideretes* spp., and *Lissemys punctata*.
  8. Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*).
  9. Squirrels.
  10. Bats – belonging to the mammalian order Chiroptera.
  11. Animals seeking food in houses, e.g., monkeys, mice, cats, etc.
  12. Porcupines (or frogs according to some).
  13. Skates (sea fish).
  14. Boneless fish.
  15. Ants on mango trees.
- i. N.B. – Sanskrit and Prakrit names after Kautilya's Arthashastra (Shamasastri, 1915; Kangle, 1967) and Asokan Inscriptions (Basak, 1996).



## **SOME ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN AN EARLY MEDIEVAL TEXT—THE ŚUKRANĪTĪ**

Rita Chaudhuri

The realisation of the inherent and intimate relationship between Man and Nature and their mutual interdependence had dawned very early in ancient Indian thought. Apart from some early texts, it is apparent from the codes of conduct and morality, embodied in the works of Kauṭilya, Manu, Yājñavalkya and others, that, while they acknowledge that natural resources are indispensable for enriching, human life, they recognise mankind's imperative obligation to conserve the same for posterity.

This idea finds ample exposition in the Śukranīti of Śukrāchar-ayya. (tentatively ascribed by some scholars to the (12th A.D. and by others to the period A.D. 600-1200 or as late as the early 19th.<sup>1</sup> Despite strong doubts regarding its originality,<sup>2</sup> the illuminating data presented herein, on ancient Indian social, political and economic life, including her knowledge of geography, mineralogy, botany, zoology, morals and manners, religious rites and institutions, jurisprudence and international law, may well be analysed for the present purpose.

Interesting, from this point of view, are the specific instructions contained in the texts, that people must never "obstruct the tanks, wells, parks, boundaries or place hinderances to the use of religious houses, temples and roads .....".<sup>3</sup> This is reinforced by the king's remonstrance that he "will destroy by severe punishment those offenders who after hearing these decrees would act contrary to them".<sup>4</sup> Moreover, to ensure the widest possible publicity, the royal orders are to be proclaimed by the beating of state drums and displaying them in public places such as squares and street crossings.<sup>5</sup> Amongst the twenty two cases of Rajānyaya, i.e. offences against the state in which the king is personally required to adjudicate, are those involving destroyers of roads, water reservoirs and houses, as also those who fill up ditches and destroy grains.<sup>6</sup> This attests to the prevailing awareness of the times, of the need to maintain Nature's balance by preventing acts of wanton destruction. Consequently, the institution of a strict system of vigilance is necessary.

In Śukra's list of State officials to be elected by the king on the

basis of specific qualifications are those who are required to construct parks, artificial forests and pleasure gardens<sup>7</sup> and maintain supervision over them. Indeed, the author considers it to be a pious act for wise men to donate land for Gods, parks and public grounds.<sup>8</sup> Presumably, it was felt that in an urban civilization, the creation of wide expanses of greenery can bring in a semblance of a natural environment.

Śukra, furthermore, draws our attention to the need for maintenance of such open grounds. These are to be carefully tended by a Superintendent of Parks and forests.<sup>9</sup> He is to be knowledgeable regarding the growth and development of fruits and flowers, the planting and tending of trees by the administration of soil and water at suitable times and who is to be acquainted with their medicinal properties.

Numerous historical instances of royal duties attest to the fact, that tree planting constituted an important part of Rājadharmā. Śukra's distinction between "domestic plants" to be planted in villages and "wild trees" to be planted in forests point to an appreciable advancement in the field of Botany.<sup>10</sup> In the former category are included such trees, shrubs and creepers yielding good flowers, fruits and vegetables or possessing other useful properties, while the latter include thorny trees and those which are expansive and yield good timber.

The Agri-flori-horti cultural ideas prevalent in those times are amply reflected in Śukra's details regarding the method of tending plants. The text contains instructions regarding timings for watering plants during specific seasons, the application of manure for the enrichment of the soil and nourishment of plants, the application of water mixed with the powder of the dung of goats and sheep as well as that of yava (barley). Tila (Seeds) and beef (kept together for seven nights) which leads to the enhancement in the growth of flowers and fruits, of all trees and methods for the rejuvenation of sick plants.<sup>11</sup> Inherent in these prescriptions is the realisation that trees and plants, so necessary for human subsistence, required careful nurturing and tending to prevent their eventual extinction.

A section of the Śukranīti is devoted to planting and maintenance of specific kinds of trees in forests. In this context, the prominent role played by forests in the formulation of Indian History and Culture may be noticed. They have provided homes to countless sages and ascetics, some of whose ingenuity have been

instrumental in preserving for posterity, one of the greatest literary works of all times—the Vedas—which forms the basis of our civilisation. Moreover, our ancients uphold the ideal of four stages or Āśramas as encompassing the entire life and activities of an individual. In the third stage of his life, the Vānaprastha, he is required to leave his home for the forest to become a hermit and by meditation and penance, free his soul from material things.

Furthermore, in the political arena we read of formidable Atavi Rājyas or forest kingdoms who were often considered to be sources of danger to the outposts of civilization in the vicinity of their lands. Aśoka, in his Rock Edict XIII,<sup>12</sup> advocates a policy of compassion towards forest tribes as far as it was considered to be expedient, but warns them of dire consequences if they fail to repent. Harisena in his Allahābad Prasāsti<sup>13</sup> hails Samudra Gupta as the conquerer of "Atavi-rajyas", which then denoted the hilly tracts, full of dense forests, extending eastwards from Jubbulpore. Much later, in his brief text book on government in Telegu, the "Amuktamalyada", Krishna Deva Rāya, speaks of forest folks who caused no little trouble to the king and his subjects; but like Aśoka he advocated fair and honest treatment towards them on the pretext that if the king, "Wins their affection by kindness and charity, they serve him by invading the enemy's territory and plundering his forts."<sup>14</sup> Presumably, forests then, were productive enough to sustain whole tribes and kingdoms of people who were strong enough to contend with the imperial power.

The awareness of the need for developing and conserving resources is evident from Śukra's observance on various land related matters. In Chapter IV, Section II of his text, he emphasises on the importance of reclaiming waste lands and bringing them under cultivation. The king is forbidden to demand anything from entrepreneurs who embark on new ventures or cultivate new lands and dig tanks, canals and wells for their welfare, until they can realise a profit twice the amount they have invested.<sup>15</sup> This is obviously intended to act as an incentive for the individual to transform waste lands into useful repositories of natural resources necessary for sustaining an ever growing population. Śukra further advises the king to be discrete in the collection of taxes from cultivable plots, variously irrigated by tanks, canals or wells, by rains and by rivers respectively.<sup>16</sup> Since cultivation is assured in places which are watered by rivers, the government is entitled to the highest amount of revenue, which may be about one half. But

where cultivation is dependent on rainfall, the yield is uncertain and hence the demand shall be as small as one-third. Again, in places where people construct tanks and other artificial sources of water supplies, agriculture may be certain but a lot of hard labour and expense is involved. In such places, the Government's demand shall be midway - between the two cases mentioned above. From barren and rocky soils, government earning shall be as low as one-sixth.

Śukra's opinion regarding the principles of taxation that are to be adopted by the king, attest to the prevalent awareness of the times regarding the need of refraining from exorbitant and oppressive taxation which will greatly hinder the development of natural resources and undermine a state's efficiency. While, it is recognised that "the king should ..... enjoy fruits everywhere," he has a corresponding obligation that he "should protect all like a servant."<sup>18</sup> In procuring revenue or rent from his subjects, the king has been advised to be expedient, as "the ruler who extracts his share through cupidity (i.e. beyond his dues) is ruined with his subjects."<sup>19</sup> He advises the collector of taxes to be like the gardener who "collects flowers and fruits, after having duly nourished the trees with care...."<sup>20</sup> Again, in the matter of collecting rent from peasants, the king is expected to realise it, "in the fashion of the weaver of the garland, not of the coal merchant."<sup>21</sup> Inherent in these strictures is a caution to the king to avoid burdensome taxation which may, cause irreparable damage to the sources of revenue and consequent economic instability.

The text contains many observances on the economic viability of an advantageously located capital city; on the need for cities to be beautified and provided with civic amenities; on the efficacy of connecting cities and villages with an elaborate network of roads and for maintaining them in good condition; on the advantages of a city possessing natural fortifications such as ditches, hills, deserts, walls of stones and mud and water, which may act as deterrents to advancing enemy forces and on the compassionate treatment to be meted out to animals. Evidently, our ancients could envisage that maintaining an unpolluted and comfortable environment and conserving Nature's bounties including plant and animal life were unavoidable obligations, if human life is to survive on this earth. This concept assumes importance today, as we apprehend an impending environmental crisis.

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## SOCIAL AND RITUAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE HOUSEHOLDER : POSITION OF THE LOWER CASTES

Bhaskar Chattopadhyay

The main theme of the *Gṛhyasūtras*<sup>1</sup> is intimately related to the ideal life of a householder. In most of them the marriage ceremony is dealt with in the beginning, presumably because the life of a householder begins after the marriage. Description is given of the ceremonies connected with the birth of a child, first taking of rice (*annaprāśana*), tonsure (*chūḍākaraṇa*), initiation (*upanayana*) and lastly funeral rites (*śrāddha*). The domestic customs and usages, referred to in *Gṛhyasūtras*, explain how a householder used to follow a particular life-style or way of life. The *Gṛhyasūtras* also describe the five 'great sacrifices,' that is, the daily sacrifices to Brahman, forefathers, gods, living beings other than man and to the human beings. Those sacrifices are explained in detail in the *Manusmṛti*<sup>2</sup> also. The explanation of the sacrifices as given in the *Manusmṛti* seems to be more explicit than in the *Gṛhyasūtras*. However, the sacrifice to the Brahman constitutes the daily study of the *Vedas*, whereas the 'sacrifices to man' is nothing but hospitality shown to a guest. The simple offerings of food and libation of water constitute the sacrifices to the god and fathers and offerings of food to the living creatures are the last but not the least sacrifice. Thus the *Pañcamahāyajñas* (*Brahmayajña*, *Nṛyajña*, *Devayajña*, *Pitṛajña* and *Bhūtajajña*) seem to have been of great importance in the day-to-day life of a householder (*grhastha*) in ancient times. Deeper significance is attached with those sacrifices, as these reflect an earnest desire on the part of a householder to bring his life in connection with a higher power and to share his joys and sufferings with the society consisting of not only human beings but also other living creatures. This desire of a householder has been attached with a religious sanctification.

The question may arise as to whether the performance of five daily sacrifices constituted the life of each and every householder. In the *Manusmṛti* it is said that if a householder fails to perform daily five great sacrifices he commits five kinds of sins (*sūnā*). Obviously, it was imperative on the part of every householder to perform those sacrifices. But the performance of those sacrifices is prescribed for the householders belonging to upper three castes, namely, the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas. The *Sūtras* are,

therefore, not allowed to enjoy the rights and privileges of a householder by the lawgivers. In Kauṭilya's *Arthasāstra*<sup>3</sup> it is said that :

The duty of a householder is earning livelihood by his own profession, marriage among his equals of different ancestral R̥sis, intercourse with his wedded wife after her monthly ablution, gifts to gods, ancestors, guests and servants and eating of the remainder.

Kauṭilya is found to have given the topmost importance to the stage of *gārhasthya* among the four *āśramas* or stages of life. He has never made any distinction among the castes in respect of the performance of householder's duties. But it appears that his prescription is meant for the *Āryas* and he has indirectly disallowed those who lived beyond the Aryan fold. It is implied that the *Śūdras*, who had been absorbed in the Aryan society, were not disallowed to perform the daily five great sacrifices. Again, the *Śūdra's* right to perform the funeral rites as well as the five daily sacrifices is recognised by Yājñavalkya<sup>4</sup>, although a *Śūdra* is not allowed the right to the Vedic study. In Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* it is said that the *Śūdra* caste consisting of various professional and ethnic groups occupied different social grades. Among them, the highest grade consisting of the *Śakas*, *Yavanas*, *Kiṣkindhas*, *Sauryas* and *Krauñchas*, who lived outside the *Āryāvarta* but within the Aryan fold, were entitled to perform sacrifices and to eat from an Aryan's dish without making it polluted permanently. From the available textual references it appears that the position of the *Śūdras* in respect of the social duties and privileges is not clearly defined, although it seems to be likely that there was a section of the *Śūdras* who got recognition gradually in the eyes of the lawgivers.

As a case study, the social history of ancient Bengal may be taken up for a fresh scrutiny. The society in Bengal was sharply divided into two castes, namely, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the non-*Brāhmaṇas* or the *Śūdras*. The *Bṛhaddharma* and the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇas*<sup>5</sup> bear testimony to the above. In the Gupta land grants found in Bengal<sup>6</sup> mention is often made of the performance of daily five great sacrifices by the *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Brāhmaṇas* received liberal grant, of land as permanent endowments so that they were in a position to maintain the expenditure involved in the performance of daily five great sacrifices. Even if it is held that the *Śūdras* were not generally allowed to perform the daily sacrifices, it was expected of them that

they should perform other duties assigned to a householder. The ethical values that were attached by implication to the daily sacrifices or gifts, referred to in the *Gṛhyaasūtras*, *Dharmaśāstras* and *Arthaśāstra*, might have been upheld by some other alternative ways and means. It has been enjoined in the *Mahābhārata*<sup>7</sup> that the duties of the *Sūdras* include respectful attention to parents, teachers, preceptors, kings and those living in hermitages. Besides, the virtues of non-injury, truthfulness, purity and forbearance were expected of them. If possible, they should have also done some humanitarian works.

In fact, the injunctions laid down in the *Śruti* and *Smṛtis* seem to have had but little impact upon the vast majority of the population in ancient Bengal. The monopolisation of the Vedic studies by the *Brāhmaṇas* drove the non-*Brāhmaṇa* majority to the study of the *Epics* and the *Purāṇas* wherefrom they could derive an inspiration to follow the cult of *bhakti* or devotion to a chosen divinity (*iṣṭa*). In fact, the *Purāṇic bhakti* cult manifested itself in the forms of *Vaiṣṇavism*, *Śaivism* and *Śāktism*. With the spread of sectarian cults, the literature of the respective sects gradually increased in volume and number. The eighteen *Upapurāṇas* or minor *Puranic* texts had their origin and some of them are known to have been composed in Bengal and Assam. Therefore, instead of the Vedic study that was prohibited for the common people, the sectarian religious literature might have served the purpose for daily study of scriptures. Secondly, instead of offering food in the domestic fire in the name of divinities, an arrangement might have been for daily worship of the five divinities, namely, *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva*, *Śakti*, *Śūrya* and *Gaṇapati*, which is known as *Pañcopāsanā*. Thirdly, respect might have been paid to the ancestors either daily or occasionally without any ritual like libation of water. In fact, the traditional ancestor-worship was inherited from the pre-Aryans and the pre-Dravidians. Fourthly, hospitality to the guests might be shown without any difficulty. Because, in course of time, *atithi* (guest) was considered as *Nārāyaṇa*, that is a divinity. Lastly, there should have been no restriction in any case to the offering of food to the birds and beasts. In fact, the treatment meted out to the guests and to other living creatures widened the scope of householders' social obligation.

While a section of the people was in favour of promoting the cult of *bhakti* as enunciated in the *Epics* and the *Purāṇas*, the other one switched over to Buddhism, mainly in its *Mahāyāna* form in



early medieval Bengal. The social values attached with Buddhism stood for democratic rights and privileges of the people belonging to any category and naturally made Vedic Brahmanism more and more unpopular in Bengal. the Buddhist lay-devotees (*gṛhī upāsakas* and *upāsikās*) laid emphasis upon the worship of Lord Buddha on the one hand, and performance of the virtues as enjoined in the relevant texts of the *Suttapitaka*.<sup>8</sup> Till the degeneration of the *Mahāyāna* form of Buddhism in the mystic form of Tantricism, the people belonging to the Buddhist sect were in the right track as far as their daily social commitments were concerned. Side by side with Buddhism, Jainism also had its influence upon a large section of people in Bengal. The remnants of those Jains may still be traced among the *Śrāvakas* or *Sarāks*, recognised as one of the castes. Therefore, the Brāhmaṇas were not in a position to deprive the non-Brāhmaṇas of their social duties and privileges. Religious sanctification was made available to the people at large either by the Epics and the *Purāṇas* or by the scriptures of the heterodox sects.

From the works of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, Jīmūtavāhana, Aniruddhabhaṭṭa, Vallālasena and others<sup>9</sup> we learn that the life of the orthodox Hindus, especially the Brāhmaṇas in Bengal, was characterised by the various purificatory rites and ceremonies prevalent in other parts of India, which were known as *saṁskāras* observed at every stage of a man's life, from conception in the mother's womb to death or even beyond it. The centre of these *saṁskāras* was, no doubt, the household and, therefore, the householder had a significant role to play in the performance of those *saṁskāras*. Those used to be performed on the lines prescribed by the *Śruti* and the *Smṛtis*. But, the contributions of local customs, family traditions and even superstitions to the procedures of Vedic rites and sacraments were not at all negligible. This has been hinted at in the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra*.<sup>10</sup> In this connection, our attention is drawn to Halāyudha's *Brāhmaṇasarvasva*.<sup>11</sup> Halāyudha informs us that the Brāhmaṇas of *Rāḍha* and *Varendra* did not study the *Vedas* and therefore did not know the Vedic rites properly. The main object of his work is to supply a guide to the knowledge of the meanings of the daily rites (including, of course, the five great sacrifices) and the periodical domestic (*gṛhya*) ceremonies known as *saṁskāras*. It may, therefore, be reasonably held that very few Brāhmaṇas in Bengal could genuinely claim a position that was distinguished from and higher than that of the non-Brāhmaṇas or the so-called *Sūdras* or

mixed castes, so far as the discharge of social duties was concerned.

The scheme of the four stages of life (*āśramas*) was designed to give wide scope to the people in the choice of vocation in life which was best suited to their intellectual capacity and mental inclinations. It was not necessary that one should strictly follow the sequence of the four stages. It was left to the choice of an individual whether one would prefer the householder's life or renounce it. But in the social consciousness there was an urge for the choice of the householder's life, because, if the duties of a householder were neglected by a large section, the socio-economic life was sure to be disturbed. The Brāhmaṇas obviously formed the minority section of the population. Therefore, satisfactory performance of the household-duties by them only should not have been considered enough. The larger section or the majority of the population comprising the non-Brāhmaṇas was to be pressed into the service of the society. In that case, monopolisation of the *gārhasthyadharma* by the Brāhmaṇas according to the dictates of the *Ṛgveda* could not be acceptable either to the society or to the state. The preponderance of Vedicism or Brahmanism in the way of life might have put social interests in jeopardy. The crisis was, however, avoided, when the people took the purāṇic religion or the heterodox faith as a source of inspiration of social ethics. Further, the family tradition, local customs, individual inclinations and even some superstitions could not be overruled by the restrictions imposed from above by the Brāhmaṇas.

*Pañchamahāyajña* or making five kinds of gifts to pay off individual's social and ritual obligations (*ṛina*) is deeply ingrained in the social conscience. There is no enforcement mechanism to ensure their observance. Reformers in nineteenth century Bengal did not make any attempt to bring about alteration in the rules of *gārhasthyadharma*, as they are not without some positive aspects. In practice, those notions have become gradually obsolete due to the spread of western education, science and technology.<sup>12</sup> Although the custom of maintaining domestic fire in every household was abolished, the practices of looking deeply into ancient scriptures with a rational frame of mind, recording the memories of forefathers in the form of historical facts, maintaining a close link with some divinities symbolising purity with joy, upholding an ideal of rendering service to men, birds and beasts, have been still continuing both at the family and social levels irrespective of caste and creed.

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## RAMAGUPTA PROBLEM REVISITED

Korak K. Chaudhuri

The identity and historicity of Rāmagupta of the Gupta period has been a much debated issue among Indologists ever since Sylvain Levi first drew attention in October 1923 to six extracts from Viśākhadatta's long lost drama *Devīcandraguptam*, preserved in the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* of Rāmacandra and Guṇabhadra.<sup>1</sup> In 1923, A. Rangaswami Sarasvati also published three extracts from the same drama, quoted in the *Śṛṅgārarūpakam*, an unpublished work, attributed to king Bhoja of Dhārā.<sup>2</sup> Taking into account other verses available in some later sources, like Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harṣacarita* and the work of his commentator Śankarārya, the *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā* of Rājaśekhara (c. A.D. 900), the Sanjān copper plates of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Amoghavarṣa I (A.D. 814-78) dated in Śaka year 793 (A.D. 871), the Cambay (the Śaka year 852 = A.D. 930) and the Sāngli (Śaka year 855 = A.D. 933) plates of Govinda IV etc.<sup>3</sup> the total number of passages amount to thirteen.

The story of the drama is too well known to be discussed here. But it may simply be pointed that at first a set of scholars took this strange and romantic episode of Rāmagupta to be a pure myth (especially because of the absence of any such figure from the official Gupta genealogy), though later on he was accorded by them the recognition of a genuine historical personage. After that, host of arguments have been exchanged to determine the exact historical position of Rāmagupta and with the discovery of fresh material the controversy has deepened more and more, leading to the multiplication of scholarly papers on the subject. However, despite enough deliberations, it can not even now be said that the chapter has been closed and a unanimous solution reached. This is because researchers, broadly divided into two groups and either clinging to the view that Rāmagupta was a scion of the Imperial Gupta dynasty or on the contrary declaring him as a mere local chief of eastern Mālwā, have not shifted from their respective standing. Therefore the position is still stiff and leaves scope open for offering an altogether new perspective by which to judge the historical setting of Rāmagupta on the basis of available data.

Our first premise is that the Nālandā copper plate inscription of Samudragupta-year 5 has to be regarded as an authentic document. It is true that on various grounds competent epigraphists including J.F. Fleet and D.C. Sircar have categorically branded the

Nālandā plate of year 5 as spurious and forged long after the time of Samudragupta.<sup>4</sup> But this opinion has been forcefully challenged by others who regard the said record (as also the Gayā copper plate of the same ruler-year 9) as genuine and assume that the Nālandā grant was duly issued by Samudragupta in year 5.<sup>5</sup> Even if its authenticity is negated, we can perhaps entertain the probability that the contents as well as the date of the Nālandā grant was based on a correct knowledge of facts. Thus some scholars remotely recognised its 'value', though at the end called it 'doubtful'.<sup>6</sup> We are therefore inclined to accept the Nālandā plate as a genuine record of Samudragupta.

Meanwhile, it would be necessary to remember that the Nālandā plate of year 5 mentions *kumāra* Candragupta (II) probably as the *dūtaka* of the grant.<sup>7</sup> In whichever sense the date, year 5, is taken, it may be reasonably assumed that by the time when the Nālandā plate was incised to record the grant of land, Candragupta (II) had attained at least 15 or 16 years of age, enabling him to participate in public administration, presumably in various capacities, for instance as *dūtaka*, as in the present case.<sup>8</sup> As a parallel example, reference may be made to the Cedi king Khāravela of Kālīṅga, who according to the Hāthigumphā cave inscription (end of the 1st century B.C. or beginning of the 1st century A.D.) occupied the position of crown-prince (*Yovaraja*) on the completion of the 15th year, i.e., at the age of 16.<sup>9</sup>

The second important point is the sense in which the date (year 5) of the Nālandā plate is to be taken, i.e., whether it is to be associated with the Gupta era of A.D. 319-20 or to be treated as a regnal year of Samudragupta. If the year 5 is referred to the Gupta era, the date of the grant would be A.D. 324-25, when Candragupta II should have been at least of 15 years, making his birth probable at about A.D. 310. This reconstruction would naturally mean that Candragupta II was about 65/70 years of age in A.D. 375/76 (or A.D. 380/81), when his accession to the imperial throne is clearly attested by the Mathurā pillar inscription of the regnal year 5 (or 1) and the Gupta year 61 (A.D. 380/81).<sup>10</sup> But this is at the face of it a palpably absurd proposition, meaning thereby that the date of the Nālandā grant would have to be considered as the regnal year of Samudragupta, the only other alternative. Since the date of Samudragupta's accession to the throne is not exactly known, his 5th regnal year can not be confidently converted to any year of the Christian era. But this much may be contended, in continuation of our previous argument, that the 5th regnal year of

Samudragupta probably coincided with more or less the 15th year of Candragupta II. This supposition, if accepted, necessarily follows that Candragupta II was 10 years old when Samudragupta ascended the throne.

Now in view of the facts that Samudragupta made extensive conquests on all sides of India and had through the chief queen Dattādevī many sons and grandsons (*bahu-putra-pautrāḥ*), most scholars assume that he could not have ruled for less than 35/40 years.<sup>11</sup> On the ground that Candragupta II is known for certain to have commenced his reign-period from A.D. 375/76, the time of his illustrious father may be tentatively fixed between c. A.D. 335/40 and 375/76. Even if the historicity of Rāmagupta, the alleged elder brother of Candragupta II and the immediate successor of Samudragupta, is conceded, there is little doubt that he had a very short and insignificant reign-period to his credit. Thus much space need not be left, intervening the conclusion of Samudragupta's reign and the beginning of the rule of Candragupta II. Granting that Candragupta II was ten years old when his father came to power about c. A.D. 335/40, the former must have been born about c. A.D. 325/30.<sup>12</sup> According to this scheme of chronology and distribution of data, Candragupta II should be 45/50 years old in A.D. 375/76, when he himself occupied the Gupta throne.

But this inference clearly goes against the evidence of the dramatic work *Devācandraguptam*, which presents prince Candragupta (II) as a daring impressionable young man, still unmarried and presumably not more than 25 years of age. What transpires therefore is that the above calculation definitely weakens the historical credibility of the said play and thereby makes less tenable the view (the offshoot of the drama) that Rāmagupta, as a member of the imperial Gupta family, ascended the throne after Samudragupta, to be eventually supplanted (and murdered) by his younger brother Candragupta II. On the contrary, available data tend to indicate that Rāmagupta was a local ruler of eastern Mālwa sometime in the Gupta period, because it is difficult to overtake the implication of the fact that both sets of evidence—the three Jain image inscriptions from Durjanpur and copper coins belonging to Rāmagupta, hail from one and the same locality Vidiśā in eastern Mālwa. It is not improbable that Rāmagupta, who never ascended the Gupta throne, was a scion of the imperial Gupta dynasty. Hence it is logical to presume that at first the story was deemed as a suitable topic for drama and concocted at a certain stage of history to highlight the bravery, heroism and chivalry of Candragupta II, the

common characteristics of the princes of the Gupta family. In course of time, the theme because of its intrinsic and startling appeal gained wide publicity and popularity, continued for several centuries and was acclaimed by the masses as a genuine representation of a glorious past and hence took firm roots in Indian traditions.<sup>13</sup> This probably explains why the echo of the story is heard of in several sources of much later period.<sup>14</sup>

#### Notes and References :

1. Sylvain Levi, *Journal Asiatique*, October-December, 1923, pp. 201-206; A.S. Altekar, *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* (henceforth *JBORS*), Vol. XIV, 1928, pp. 223ff. Rāmacandra and Guṇābhadrā were the disciples of the famous Jain saint Hemacandra, a contemporary of the Caulukya king Kumārapāla (c. A.D. 1143-73) of Anahilapātaka of Gujarata.
2. A. Rangasvami Sarasvatī, *Indian Antiquary* (henceforth *IA*), Vol. LII, 1923, pp. 181-84. In 1936, V. Raghavan published two more passages, quoted in Sagarānandin's *Nāṭaka Lakṣmaṇakoṣa*.
3. Verse 48 of the Sanjan plate; D.R. Bhandarkar, *Epigraphia Indica* (henceforth *Ep. Ind.*), Vol. XVIII, 1925-26, pp. 248-55; Bhandarkar identifies the anonymous Gupta king referred to in this record with Skandagupta Vikramāditya, but not with Candragupta II. For the Cambay and Sangli plates, see respectively *Ep. Ind.*, VII, p. 26 and *IA.*, XII, p. 247. For an analysis of these sources cf. K.C. Chattopadhyay, *Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume*, p. 118.
4. J.F. Fleet (ed.), *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* (henceforth *C.I.I.*), Vol. III, p. 254; D.C. Sircar (ed.), *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. I, second revised edition, 1965, Calcutta, p. 270ff and note 4. The said copper-plate was discovered in course of excavations at Nalanda in the year 1927-28. A short note was published on it by Dr. H. Sastri and it was subsequently edited by Mr. A. Ghosh, *Ep. Ind.* XXV, p. 50, who also doubted its genuineness. See also D.C. Sircar, *Ep. Ind.*, XXVI, 1941-42, p. 135-36.
5. R.C. Majumdar, *Indian Culture*, Vol. II, no. 4. April-June, 1944-45, pp. 225-30; R.C. Majumdar and A.S. Altekar (ed.), *A New History of the Indian People*, Vol. IV, 1946, p. 159; R.D. Banerji, *Age of the Imperial Guptas*, 1933, pp. 7ff; R.N. Dandekar, *A History of the Guptas*, 1941, pp. 44ff; for a recent attempt to prove this document as genuine, see *Journal of the Bihar Research Society* (henceforth *JBRS*), Vol. XLVII, pp. 330-35.
6. H.C. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India* (with a Commentary by B.N. Mukherjee, 1996), p. 470.

7. Hirananda Sastri, *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1927-28, p. 138; D.R. Bhandarkar's *List*, No. 2075; D.R. Bhandarkar regarded the plate as genuine; A. Ghosh, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXV, 1939-40, pp. 50-53; D.C. Sircar, *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVI, 1941-42, pp. 135-36.
8. S.R. Goyal ('Gupta Chronology', *JBRS*, Vol. LII, 1966, pp. 14ff and pp. 54-55) also thinks that Candragupta II was about 15 years old, when his father started ruling, and was born about A.D. 335. But he assigns 20 years of reign to Samudragupta, placing his accession in c. A.D. 350. It is to be noted that Goyal subscribes to the historicity and genuineness of the Rāmāgupta story.
9. K.P. Jayaswal, *JBORS*, Vol. III, 1917, p. 431.
10. Cf. the Mathura pillar inscription, D.R. Bhandarkar, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, 1931-32, pp. 1ff.
11. Cf. the undated and mutilated Eran stone pillar inscription of Samudragupta, line 19 in D.C. Sircar, *Sel. Ins.*, I, pp. 268ff; J.F. Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 2, pp. 20-21.
12. See note 8.
13. A.S. Altekar, who takes the data embedded in the *Devicandra-guptam* at their face-value, admits of the prevailing tendency of the scholars to discredit the story, referred to by Bāṇa and amplified by his commentator Sankarārya (op. cit., p. 236). For those, among many, who do not rely on the drama, see Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 301, rejecting the tradition as 'scandalous'; S.K. Ayyangar, *Journal of Indian History* (henceforth *JIH*), 1927, Kerala University Supplement, p. 52; A.R. Sarasvati, op. cit., p. 183; D.C. Sircar, (*JIH*, Vol. XL, 1962, pp. 533-36) has elaborately studied the copper coins of Rāmāgupta and has shown why he can not be regarded as a member of the Gupta family. He believes that as a local chief of eastern Malwa, Rāmāgupta like Harigupta and Indragupta flourished in the outlying provinces of the Gupta empire about the close of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th centuries A.D. and issued copper coins in imitation of the imperial Gupta money on the decline of the Guptas. However, Prof. K.D. Bajpai has offered a sharp rejoinder to this opinion of D.C. Sircar in *JIH*, Vol. XLII, 1964, pp. 389-93. See also Sircar's remarks in *JNSI*, Vol. XXV, 1963, pp. 105-07 and pp. 165-71. H.C. Raychaudhuri emphatically negates the historical value of the Rāmāgupta episode in 'Vikramāditya in History and Legend; *Vikrama Volume*, Scindhia Oriental Institute, 1948, pp. 483-511.
14. Apart from those stated above, mention may be made of the story of Rawwal and Barkamaris, as narrated in *Mujmal-ut-Tawarikh* (Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, as told by its own Historians, I, pp. 110-12).



## VILLAGE PLANNING IN ANCIENT INDIA

Puspa Niyogi

From a minute study of the evidence of land-grants, recovered from different places, it appears that villages were generally modelled on a more or less common plan.

In the available land-grants different villages are shown as possessing the same constituent parts, described in a conventional style. Beyond the habitat (*vastu-bhūmi*) lay the arable land and beyond that was the pasture land. The *vastu-bhūmi* was high land where the villagers had their houses. Mitākshara<sup>(1)</sup> lays down that "pasture ground shall be allotted for cattle, according to the desire of villagers, or in accordance with the land or in obedience to the King", and "there should be space of one hundred *dhanus* (or four hundred cubits) between a *grāma* and the surrounding fields." At the extreme end of a village lay the waste land and the forest land. On land not used for habitation or agriculture were situated temples, halls, markets, etc.

References to village-markets are also not rare. It may be inferred that near about the village habitat lay the small village market (*hatta*), where sales and purchases went on. Śukra states that in the market-place, stalls or shops are to be placed according to the classes of commodities stocked for sale.

The internal roads of the villages may not have been usually constructed. These were village-paths for human use and paths for the use of animals (*go-patha*). These were generally formed through constant use and later became recognised as roads. The external roads, however, i.e. those which connected one village with another, or a village with a town, were better and are referred to in the inscriptions in connection with village-boundaries. Śukra says that the king should construct '*rājamārga*' in towns and *grāmas* to be used for the conveyance, of marketable commodities.<sup>2</sup> These ways (i.e. the *padyā*, *vīthi* and *mārga*) should emanate from the centre of the *grāma* and run towards east, west, north and south.<sup>3</sup> In each *grāma* there should be roads of ten cubits.<sup>4</sup> The '*pādyā*' is three cubits wide, and the '*vīthi*' five cubits.<sup>5</sup> Śukra<sup>6</sup> states that the shape of roads is to be like the back of a tortoise (i.e. high in the middle) and that they should be provided with bridges. This device prevented water from accumulating on the road. The same purpose was also served by the scheme suggested by Śukra, providing roads with drains.<sup>7</sup>

According to the Śukranīṭisāra, on both sides of the road houses are to be built on a plan based on the classification of wealth of the villagers.<sup>8</sup> These buildings must face the *rājamārga*; and at their back there should be *vīthis* and places for committing nuisance.<sup>9</sup> The houses should be arranged in two rows.<sup>10</sup> Between every two *grāmas*, a *serai* is to be built.<sup>11</sup> This is to be kept neat and tidy and managed by the village authorities.<sup>12</sup> Śukra further states that the king should build the *Garjā* house (a tavern) outside the village and there keep the drunkards.<sup>13</sup>

The king is asked to have domestic plants, planted in villages, and wild trees in the forests. The wild trees have been classified into three groups according as they are 'good, middling and ordinary'. The distance to be maintained between two trees of the same group has been specified by him; it is to be of varying lengths to be determined according to the classification of trees furnished by him.<sup>14</sup> Trees bearing good flowers are also to be planted at a place which is very close to a village.<sup>15</sup> It is evident that the growing of trees and plants, as recommended by Śukra, is a part of the state's programme for increase of wealth. Every villager, who has a house, has to lay out a garden to the left of his homestead.<sup>16</sup>

There are to be wells, canals, tanks and ponds in the village, which should be of prescribed size, provided with staircases and footpaths built around them. There should be as many tanks, wells etc. as possible so that there may be plenty of water available in the village.<sup>17</sup>

Temples of Viṣṇu, Śaṅkara, Ganeṣa, the Sun-god and Pārvatī are to be built by the king in the parks and squares, or in the centre, of a village.<sup>18</sup> Rules regarding the size and construction of these temples as well as the images to be installed in them have also been furnished in this connection.<sup>(19)</sup>

Kauṭilya advocates the policy of establishing new villages throughout a kingdom, "either by inducing foreigners to immigrate (*paradeśā-pravāhaṇena*) there or by causing the thickly populated centres of his own kingdom to send forth the excessive population (*svadeśābhishyanda-vamanēṇa-va*)". "The King" he says, "may construct villages either on new sites or on old ruins (*bhūtapūrvamabhutapūrvamva*)". These villages, each consisting of not less than a hundred families and not more than five hundred families of agricultural people of Śūdra caste, with boundaries extending as far as a *croś* (2,250 yards) or two, and capable of protecting each other shall be formed....."<sup>20</sup>

The Māyamata makes a detailed classification of villages into first, middle and lowest ranks according to the size and number of Brāhmaṇa in inhabitants.<sup>21</sup>

The Mānasāra is regarded as the standard work on the subject, which treats of various topics, such as the science of Architecture, the system of measurement and the qualifications of an architect, different branches of architecture, selection of suitable sites for temples and dwelling houses, orientation of buildings, site-plans, town-planning etc.<sup>(22)</sup> An idea about village-planning, as suggested in this work, may be formed from its description of a typical village. Such a village, says the Mānasāra, is surrounded by a wall made of bricks or stone beyond which there is a ditch broad and deep enough to prevent any enemy from attacking the village. The village has generally four gates, each in the middle of a side and also four gates at the corners. Next to the surrounding wall, inside the village is a street which runs along the four sides. This is the largest street in the village. Two other streets, each leading to the two sides of the wall, intersect each other at the centre. The main street divides the village into four large blocks, each of which is subdivided into smaller parts by other streets which are always straight, running end to end within the block. Houses stand, facing only one side of the street. The ground floors of the houses on the main streets are used as shops. The street inside the wall which runs on all sides of the village is lined with public buildings, such as schools, colleges, libraries, guest-houses etc. All other streets generally have residential buildings on both sides. The houses, high or low are of the same type. The drains (*jaladhara*) are made 'towards the sloping of the village'. Besides ponds and tanks, there are temples as well as other public buildings, gardens, parks etc. which are situated at places where they may conveniently be used by the people. The best quarters are generally occupied by the Brāhmaṇas and the artisan classes. There are separate quarters for Buddhists and Jainas. The habitations of Chaṇḍalas and the places for cremation are located outside the village wall, specially in the north-west.

The Mānasāra classifies villages according to their shape into eight types, namely, Daṇḍaka, Sarvatobhadra, Nandyāvarta, Padmaka, Svastika, Prastara, Kārmuka, and Chaturmukha. They differ also in regard to the deities worshipped and the localities of their temples.

## DAṆḌAKA

A village that resembles a staff is of this type. It is rectangular or square and possesses a wall of the same shape, with one to five roads large enough for carriages to pass and other streets smaller in size. The main streets have two footpaths with two rows of houses, standing on both sides. The houses should be three to five *daṇḍas* broad and the length should be twice or thrice their breadth. There should be a ditch or wall surrounding the village and there shall be four principal gates and other smaller ones. The village should contain 12, 24, 50, 108, or 300 Brāhmaṇa families.

## SARVATOBHADRA

A village of this type is oblong or square in shape. Like the Daṇḍaka village it has one to five carriage-roads and a surrounding street. Streets within the village instead of having two rows of houses on both sides, are to have a single row and the street next to the wall round the village has a double row of houses, with smaller streets running through all the parts. The '*Paiśācha*' (outer) part of the village is to be separated. The village should be surrounded by a ditch or wall, with four main gates on the sides and a number of smaller gates. The labourers' quarters should be located on the high ways (*mahārathyā*), the quarters of the *Vaiśyas* (trading class) and the *Sūdras* separately in the southern part. Between the east and the south-east are to be situated the houses of the cowherds and beyond these the cowsheds. Between the south and the south-west there should be the houses of the weavers and beyond these the houses of the tailors and the shoemakers. Between the west and the north-west should be the houses of the black-smiths and beyond these the houses of the fishmongers and the butchers; and between the north and the northwest the houses of the community of scribes (*Śrīkarakāyastha*) and the physicians (*Vaidyas*). On the out-skirts of the village should be the houses of the dealers in the bark of trees and oilmen and also the quarters of the *Chañḍalas* which should be situated in the north.

## NANDYĀVARTA

In shape it may be either square or oblong. It may be either of the Chaṇḍita or Sthaṇḍila or the Paramaśāyika type.

The Chaṇḍita type consists of sixty-four parts : the central four parts are known as *Brāhmya* parts; next to these twelve parts are called *Daivika*; the surrounding twenty parts are called *Manushya*; outside these parts the remaining twenty-eight are called *Paiśācha*.

The Paramaśāyika type consists of eighty-one parts, the central nine parts are known as *Brāhmya* parts; outside this sixteen parts are known as *Daivika* parts; beyond this twenty-four parts are known as *Mānushya* parts; surrounding this thirty-two are known as *Paiśācha* parts.

The Sthaṇḍila type should consist of forty-nine parts, One central plot is for the *Brahmya*; eight plots beyond this for the *Daivika*; beyond this again sixteen plots to be called *Mānushya*; beyond the *last-named* plot there are to be twenty-four plots to be known as *Paiśācha*.

A village of this type should have four main streets in the four sides running in each direction at a right angle, with other subsidiary streets. Some of the streets may have two footpaths; some one only and others without it. Lanes (*kshudra-mārga*) also are to be found in this type. The roads and streets should be consolidated with *kankar* (nodular limestone). The width of the streets (*uīthi*) should vary from three to twelve rods. The width of a large road (*mahāmarga*) should be equal to the width of a street of nine rods, etc.

The Mānasāra incorporates an elaborate account of streetplanning in regard to this type, accompanied with details about population, distribution of sites and the plots to be occupied by the different castes, erection of temples, gates and side-gates, etc. Like the other types of villages it should also have a wall or ditch around it. Large gates should be built on the four sides.

### **PADMA OR PADMAKA**

The length and breadth of a village of this category are equal but the walls which surround it may be quadrangular, sexagonal or octagonal or circular. In its internal arrangement, it should be either of the 'Chaṇḍita' or the 'Sthaṇḍila' type. 'The residential buildings should be built in the (four corners of) six plots, each divided by an oblique line'. The temple and the public hall should be built in these parts. There must be footpaths on both sides of the main roads. In addition to these roads, there may be four to eight other streets in the village. The surrounding walls should have four main gates in four directions. Its other features are mostly the same as those of the '*Nandyāyarta* type'.

### **SVASTIKA**

The 'Svastika' village like the 'Padma' village should be of equal length and breadth and be based on the 'Paramaśāyika' plan. The streets should be *svastikashaped*. A 'Svastika' village should have

eight main gates and a number of smaller ones. It should be protected by ramparts with a ditch enclosing them, A svastika village is inhabited by all classes of people, though it is especially meant for kings. The plan on which such a village is to be built may be of the 'Sthānīya' or any other plan already described.

The king's mansion may be built at the centre or at the intermediate points of the village. It may also be built, leaving out the 'Brahmya-plot', at "the middle of the four plots called *Ārya* and others". *Mānasāra* classifies villages of this type, according to the location of the royal residence. Temples are to be located inside the village. Around the temple of the village should be situated the residential buildings of the village. The central street should have one footpath. The quarters of the *Chañḍalas* should be outside the village in the north-east direction. On the east, north and in some other parts of the village there should be suitable pavilions built on solid foundations, to be used for the inspection of the army.

### PRASTARA

In shape it is either rectangular or square and is specially suitable for Kshatriyas or Vaiśyas. It should have eighty-one plots according to the '*Paramāśayika*', the *Chañḍila*, the *Sthañḍila* or any other plan. The village should have different blocks, such as the '*Paisacha*', the *Pechaka*, the *Pitha* blocks, etc. with varying numbers of plots which should be connected by streets. If the village has a '*Mahāpitha*', it should have twenty-five plots. Minute details have been furnished regarding the construction and the location of streets, measurements and details of temples and the installation of deities. The Vaiśya inhabitants of the village should have their houses built in the interior. The quarters of the working classes are to be localised round the '*Paisacha*' part. Village shops should be built along the sides of the main road which will have two footpaths. This village, as usual, is to be surrounded by walls and ditches with four main gates and a number of other gates.

### KĀRMUKA

It is semi-circular in shape; its breadth should be equal to its length or may be greater. It is of three varieties; (1) *Paṭṭana*, (2) *Kheṭa*, (3) *Kharvata* respectively, inhabited in the main by the, Vaiśya traders and labourers and lower classes of people. Villages of this type are to be constructed on the bank of a river or on a sea-coast. The streets running inside the village should be interconnected as in a pair according to the requirements of the localities through which they pass. Thus there is to be junction between the south and the

east, the north and the east, south and west and west and north. Where the two streets meet, the outside part of this junction should be bow-shaped, which explains the name given to the type (*Kārmuka*). Each separate part of the village should have one to five streets.

### CHATURMUKHA

This type is square or oblong in shape. It is surrounded by a wall of similar shape, and four main streets on the four sides. 'Two large streets crossing at right angles in the centre divide the whole site into four square blocks and the principal four gates are raised over the terminuses of these two highways.....'. The south-eastern ward is to be occupied by the Brāhmaṇas, the south-western by the ruling class while the north-eastern and western blocks are assigned to the trading class. Artisans and labourers are to have their quarters on extreme borders (*Paiśāchablock*). No residential blocks are to be erected on the main streets. This type of village, if occupied exclusively by the trading class is to be known as '*Kolakoshtha*'.

It should be added that the accounts, utilised above, have more a theoretical value than practical. It is evident, however, that much attention was given to the development of rural areas of various shapes and dimensions, suiting the needs of accommodation as well as the status and occupations of the different elements of the resident population. Considerable skill was also shown in the laying out of roads, linking up groups of neighbouring villages and towns for facility of communication. There was a lot of speculative activity in the country resulting in the evolution of a diversity of patterns of village construction.

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22. See, Acharya, P. K. Architecture of Mānasāra.
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## TANTRIC BUDDHISM

Kshanika Saha

The *Māhāyānic* development of worship and ritualistic ceremonies did not harm the cause of Buddhism so much as the incorporation of mysticism, known generally as *Tāntricism*. Historically *Tāntric* Buddhism is known as esoteric and is the last phase of Buddhism in India. Buddhism in fact lost itself in the maze of *mudrās* (finger gestures or physical postures), *Maṇḍalas* (mystical diagrams), *kriyās* (rites and ceremonies) and *caryās* (meditational practices and observance for external and internal purity). The primary concern of the Buddhist Tantra is not to establish a definite system of metaphysical thought. Just as the Hindu Tantras, taking for granted fundamental texts of the *Darśanas*, apply them to a practical effort of realisation, so the Buddhist Tantra on the basis of Mahayanic principles, dictate practical methods for the realisation of the supreme goal. These Tantras are primarily concerned with the *Sādhānā* or the religious endeavour, but not with any system of abstract philosophy. The subject matter of the Tantras may include esoteric yoga, hymns, rites, rituals, doctrines and even law, medicine, magic and so forth<sup>1</sup>.

Etymologically the word Tantra may be taken to mean a kind of elaboration (if derived from root 'Tan', to spread) or to mean knowledge (if derived from the *Tantri*). A critical study of the nature of Tantric Buddhism leads one to believe that there is no integral relation between Tantricism and Buddhism proper<sup>2</sup>.

Tantricism in Buddhism includes a mass of heterogeneous elements<sup>3</sup>, the chanting and muttering of Mantras describing the various mystic diagrams, making of postures and gestures, worshipping various types of Gods and Goddesses including a host of demigods and other such beings, meditations and salutations of various types and last but not the least yogic practices sometimes involving sex-relations. Tantric Buddhism imbibed the spirit of *Māhāyāna*. The idea of Arhathood was replaced by the idea of Bodhisattva hood of the *Māhāyānists*<sup>4</sup>. In connection with the idea of the Bodhisattva we should have a clear idea of the Bodhicitta and its production (*Bodhicitta-tpada*), which play a very important part in the theological speculations of the Tantric Buddhists as also in their *Sādhānā* of Sex-yogic practices. Bodhicitta means citta or mind firmly bent on attaining Bodhi (enlightenment) and becoming a Buddha. Bodhicitta is perfect enlightenment attained for the sake of

others (Bodhicittam Parāthaya Samyak Sambodhikāmatā).<sup>5</sup> This Bodhicitta has been variously described and eulogised in the first chapter of Bodhicaryāvatāra<sup>7</sup> of Śāntideva and last chapter of Gaṇḍavyūha. As Bodhicitta aims at the welfare of the beings, there cannot be Bodhicitta without Karuṇā (compassion). Thus we shall find a new definition of Bodhicitta in the Tantric Buddhist texts where it is said that Bodhicitta comprises in it two elements, viz. enlightenment of the nature of essencelessness (Sūnyatā) and universal compassion (Karuṇā).<sup>6</sup> This definition of Bodhicitta as the perfect comingling of Sūnyatā and Karuṇā had far-reaching effects in the transformation of the Māhāyānic ideas into the Tantric ideas.<sup>7</sup>

We find Tri-kāya of Buddha (1) Dhārma-Kāya (2) Sambhoga-kāya and (3) Nirmāṇa-kāya<sup>8</sup>.

"The transformation of the idea of Tri-kāya is found in Tantric Buddhism in two ways. The idea of Dharma-kāya substantially influenced the Tantric Buddhists in moulding of their monistic conception of the God-head. So the idea of the kāyas got associated with the various plexuses that were discovered by the Tantric Sādhakas in the different parts of the human body<sup>9</sup>.

To understand Tantricism we must go back to the original teaching of Buddha. Buddha prescribed two yānas in the beginning namely the Srāvakayāna and Pratyeka Buddhayāna. The Srāvakas were to hear from Buddha but they had to wait till the advent of another Buddha for their emancipation. In the meanwhile the Srāvakas could teach but they could neither attain Nirvāṇa themselves nor help others to attain it. The Pratyekas were eminent men, they could attain Nirvāṇa by their own efforts<sup>10</sup>.

#### ANTIQUITY OF TANTRICISM :

The Tantras make no claims for historicity, instead they claim to be revelations. It cannot be denied that in the very beginnings of Buddhism and when Mahāyāna sprang up in later times a strict discipline were followed, even during the life of Buddha these strict discipline rules were opposed by some monks. Party quarrels were in evidence in the Second Buddhist Council when the Mahāsanghikas were expelled by the orthodox who refused to make any concession on the ten minor points of discipline. The orthodox followers of the faith were sure to challenge anything that had not been sponsored by Buddha and that seems to be the reason of the great popularity of the Sangiti literature, Tantras of Buddhism are written in the Sangiti, which are diametrically opposed to the original teaching of Buddha.<sup>11</sup>

All the Tantras, Buddhist as well as Brāhmanical ascribe their doctrines and practices to the highest personalities in their religious hierarchy. The Tantras were regarded as spiritual authority per excellence and often classed with the Vedas. It has been held by some that Tantra was of foreign origin. H.P. Sastri while maintaining that Śakti worship in the important factor of Tantra held that "Tantra came from outside India. Most probably it came with the Magi priests of the Scythians."<sup>12</sup> Likewise B. Bhattacharya<sup>13</sup> opined that the "introduction of Śakti worship in religion is so un-Indian that we are constrained to admit it as an external or foreign influence" P. C. Bagchi<sup>14</sup> pointed out some possible foreign elements in the Tantras; but they are quite late importations, which belong to a period when Tantricism had become popular in India and when India's cultural contacts with northern neighbours had become well established. It is true that Tantras contain many un-Indian elements and some Brahmanical texts, condemned them. Yet it is far from truth to regard the Tantras as a whole or Śakti worship in particular, as un-Indian or of foreign origin.<sup>15</sup> Gopinath Kaviraja observes that "Tantrika worship is the worship of Śakti." The famous steatite seal from Mahenjo-daro described by John Marshall<sup>16</sup> as a "malegod" and as "the prototype of historic Siva" may equally be regarded as prototype of the Tantrika Siddhas. The association of sex with religion was a common feature of primitive beliefs; phallism has been a feature of popular religion since the dawn of civilization. About a dozen of hymns of the Rigveda are concerned with magic, which is the main and essential subject matter of the Atharvaveda. It is a collection of metrical spells. The Tantrika idea of the unity of male and female and of the female aspect being inherent in the male aspect may be compared to a passage in Rigveda where Indra appears as manifold by his māyā.<sup>17</sup>

This concept is echoed in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad,<sup>18</sup> and strongly reminds of the Śivaite theology, Mystic syllables like Svadha, svāhā, vaṭ, phaṭ, etc. abound in the Yajurveda.<sup>19</sup> In the Taittirīya Upaniṣad<sup>20</sup> the entire universe (macrocosm) with its elements and forces is equated to the human body (microcosm). The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad<sup>20</sup> compared sacrificial horse, it's organs with the universe, forces and elements. A similar "symbolical" account of the human personality is given in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad.<sup>22</sup> The pañcavidyās<sup>23</sup> describe in the Upaniṣads manifest Tantric import. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Chāndogya<sup>24</sup> described male as fire and female also as fire; the Gods sacrifice vital energy in this "female fire" (yosāgni). In the

Tantras, Vajrasttva and Vajravilāsini make sacrifice into Vajra and attain to yabyum.

Now the question arises in concerning the time and circumstances on which Tantricism came to be introduced into Buddhist fold. The early Buddhism was entirely free from Tantricism. In the Kvattasutta and Brahmajālasutta Buddha condemns magical spells, dhāranis and mantras as low arts.<sup>25</sup>

#### TRADITIONAL BEGINNINGS OF TANTRIC BUDDHISM :

Buddhist Tantras like the Mahāyāna sutras claim to have been revealed by Buddha, the origin of esoteric or Tantric Buddhism is therefore traced to Buddha himself. In the Sekoddesaṭṭikā,<sup>26</sup> a commentary on the Sekddesa section of Kālacakra tantra, it is stated that Mantrayāna had been first imparted Buddha-Dīpaṅkara, At the request of Sucandra, king of Sambhala, Buddha Śākyamuni convened a council of Sri Dhānyakaṭaka and delivered a discourse on esoteric path or Mantranaya just he had previously delivered a discourse on the Mahāyāna (Prajñāpāramitānaya) at Gṛdhrakūṭa.

This tradition is confirmed by the Tibetan historians. According to Bu-ston Rinpoche, Kālacakra system was preached by Buddha in the year of his enlightenment. He rejects the view held by other Tibetan authority that even took place in the 80th year, the year of Nirvāṇa of Buddha. According to yet another annalists, Buddha performed the act of turning wheel of the Law three times; first on the year of Enlightenment at Rṣipatana; second in the 13th year of Enlightenment at Gṛdhrakūṭa near Rajgir where he taught the Mahāyāna and third in the 16th year of Enlightenment at Sri Dhānyakaṭaka where he taught Mantrayāna. There is no reliable evidence to assume that Buddha ever went to the far south of Dhānyakaṭaka. The Pali Tipiṭaka and Ceylonese chronicals do not know this tradition. This is a late invention because Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa, which contains many elements of Mantrayāna, does know this tradition. Gūhyasamājatantra perhaps the earliest Buddhist Tantra texts, is also silent on this point. According to Benoytosh Bhattacharya there is no room for any doubt that "the tantras and the mantras, mudrās and dhāranis were taught by Buddha to the lay-devotees. According to Winternitz "there is nothing in the Tripiṭaka or any early Buddhist documents to prove that Gautama and his early disciples had anything to do with the mudrās, maṇḍala and dhāranis."<sup>27</sup> Buddha has been described as a rationalist in the Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā<sup>28</sup> itself bears witness that he discouraged superstition and recommended critical enquiry.

What Buddha emphasised to his pupils was the need of purity, fear from doing evil, sense-control and mindfulness. The Kevaṭṭha sutta shows that Buddha disapproved of magical and superhuman feats and regarded these as black arts like the gandhāri vijjā. In the Brahmajālasutta a long list of pseudosciences (vijjās) is given but Buddha apparently condemns them as low arts.

## HISTORICAL BEGINNINGS OF TANTRIC BUDDHISM

The beginnings of Tantric or Esoteric Buddhism seem to be inseparable from the beginnings of Mahāyāna Buddhism indeed the Tibetan never made any difference between Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Sutras (mdo) are classed with the Tantras (rgyud). They even went so far as to give Nāgārjuna a life span of 600 years and attributed to him Mādhyamikasāstra as well as Gūhyasamāja system.

Mantras became so fundamental to Esoteric Buddhism that the latter is often called Mantrayāna (Mantranaya). Mantras seem to have been developed from dhāranis. These dhāranis are often traced to the parittas e.g. in Āṭāna-ṭiya-sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya and to Milindapañho. But their sense in texts is not identical with those Mantras as found in the Sādhnamālā.

B. Bhattacharya's attempt to trace the evolution of the seed syllable (bījamantra) praṁ, hints at a possible process of the developments of mantras from dhāranis 'Praṁ' symbolizes 'Prajñāpāramitā'. The Aṣṭasāhasrikā was a stupendous text which could not be recited by illiterate Mahāyāna laity. Then the Prajñāpāramitahr̥dyasutta was reduced to Prajñāpāramitaekakṣari and out of this latter was evolved the bījamantra 'praṁ'. It was believed that by the muttering 'praṁ' Śūnyatā could transform herself into Prajñāpāramitā who is a veritable metamorphosis of the Prajñāpāramitā literature.<sup>26</sup>

Besides the mantras, a vast and varied pantheon is another principal feature of Tantric Buddhism. A number of semi-divine, semi-human and even demonic beings like Māra, Yakṣas, Gandhabbas, Nāgas and Devas, are known to old Buddhism. They appear as much inferior to Buddha and as protectors and devotees of Dharmma save the evil Māra.<sup>27</sup> Lalitavistara,<sup>28</sup> a text partly Sarvāstivādin and partly Mahāyanist, introduces Buddha in an assembly attended not only by Bhīṣkhus, Bhīṣkhuṇīs, upāsaka and upāsikās but also by Deva, Nāgas, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Sakia, Brahmā and the Lokpālas.<sup>29</sup>

The Dharmasaṅgraha attributed to Nāgārjuna knows the following deities<sup>30</sup> five Buddhas-Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi, four goddesses Rocanī, Māmki, Paṇḍurā and Tārā. The list of 18 Lokpālas includes among others, Indra, Yama, Varuṇa, Kubera, Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa, Candra, Sūrya, Pṛthvi and Asura. The six yoginis mentioned in it are Vajravārāhi, Yamini, Samcarāni, Samtrasani, Caṇḍikā. The eight bodhisattvas listed are Maitreya, Gaganaganja, Sāmantabhadra, Vajrapāni, Mañjuśrī, Sarvanivasan Viskambhi Kṣitigarbha and Khagarbha.<sup>31</sup>

The most important and famous Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is not mentioned here. Avalokita, the supreme advocate of the doctrine of compassion is seen as the husband Prajñāpāramitā, now called Tārā, the embodiment of wisdom (Prajñā). The description of Nairātmya (i.e. Prajñā and Śūnyatā) in the Nairātmyaparipṛcchā Sutra reads like the description of Prajñopaya; in fact the compounds like "Mahāsukha" "Bodhicitta and Prajñāpāramitā are used here as synonym and this is called Prajñāpāramitānaya.<sup>32</sup> This 'mahāsukha' according to Vajrayāna authorities, is impossible of attainment without Śakti the embodiment of Karuṇā.

### CHRONOLOGY OF TANTRIC BUDDHISM

The generally accepted opinion among scholars is that the Tāntrik Buddhism appeared in the 7th Century A. D. B. Bhattacharya, G. Tucci, Gopinath Kaviraj seem to have been inclined to push the date of the emergence of Buddhist esoterism back to the time of Maitreya and Asaṅga Rāhula. Samkṛtyāyan had also drawn attention to the great antiquity of Mantrayāna. According to the Tibetan traditions<sup>32</sup> Nāgārjuna, the great Mādhyamika dialectician, father of Mahāyāna was a great magician (Mahāsiddha); acquired many dhāraṇīs, Prajñā texts and Sādhana and propagated esoteric teachings. He was expert in medical sciences, alchemy and divination. He lived in Śrīparvata for 200 years and at other places enjoying a life of over five hundred years.<sup>33</sup>

In all probability this Tibetan account of Nāgārjuna refers to another person of that name, a Tantric author and a Siddha who flourished in about the 8th Century A. D. and the author of Mādhyamik śāstra and Suhṛllekha, a contemporary of Kaniṣka. The Mādhyamika philosopher's association with mystical system is suggested not only by the Tibetan traditions but also by reliable authorities like Hiuen-Tsang, I-tsing, Bānabhaṭṭa and Mañjuñrīmūlakalpa. Moreover, Pāramitanaya is in essence identical

with Mantrayāna (Tantricism). It is not unlikely that Prajñā of the Sutra has become Śakti in the Tantras, Nāgārjuna's own encyclopaedic treatise the Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra and his Prañjāpāramitāstava would lead to the same conclusion.

Aśaṅga's is famous in tradition to have received from Maitreya in Tuṣita heaven not only esoteric teaching but also a number of works. This Maitreya supposed to be a celestial Bodhisattva by Hiuen-Tsang and Tāranātha, was a historical person, who wrote some standard texts on Buddhist mysticism which were commented upon by Aśaṅga.<sup>34</sup> G. C. Pande<sup>35</sup> has pointed out in Asanga's Abhidharmasamuccaya, an allusion to erotic mysticism and the author uses the compound Abhisandhiviniścaya which implied a double meaning, one manifest and the other intended. This clearly seems to be the forerunner style of the Tantrika Sandhabhāṣā. Tāranātha says that esoteric texts were secretly transmitted from the time of Aśaṅga onwards. B. Bhattacharya held the opinion that the Prajñāpāramitā-Sādhanā attributed in its colophon to Aśaṅga is also a work of this celebrated Doctor.

G. Tucci has drawn a pointed attention to the fact that in the Rattvasiddhiśāstra of Harivarman there is a reference to a Tantrika school called Nayasāma probably a Tantrika Kāpālika sect, which believed in sixteen categories. These sixteen categories are enumerated in the Madhyantanugama Śāstra of Maitreya-nātha. Winternitz criticised the great antiquity claimed for the rise of Buddhist Tantricism by B. Bhattacharya and Tucci.<sup>36</sup> The Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra existed before the fourth century A. D. This text bears clear impact of Tantra and Purāṇic religion. The Suvarṇaprabhāsa sūtra first translated into Chinese in A. D. 414-433 by Dharmakṣema and in the sixth century by Paramārtha and in the 7th century by I-tsing for a great part already bears the stamp of a Tantra and is quite Tantric in its contents, formulae and rites. The Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiduryaprabhārāja sūtra had been translated into Chinese by Dharmagupta in 615 A.D. and by Hiuen-Tsang 650 A.D. This text shows unmistakable influence of Tantricism. It refers to dreadful Tāntrika practices and spells and includes rākṣas among deities that were worshipped; those who eat flesh and blood, frequent cemeteries and perform sādhanas. Ghora-vidyās, are also described.

A few more texts, the contents of which are quite Tantrika are also known. The mahāmāyūrividyārajñi, a Tantrika Dhārani was translated into Chinese by Śrimitra and by Kumārajīva (402-404 A.D.). The Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa is a ritual text of Mantrayāna, dealing

with numerous gods, goddess, their iconography, mudrās, mantras, maṇḍalas and popular worship, although it styles itself as Mahāyāna Vaipulya śāstra.<sup>37</sup>

B. Bhattacharya<sup>38</sup>, placed the original text of the Mañjusrimūlakalpa which had 28 chapters only in the 2nd century A.D. The subsequent chapters he described as later additions. His main argument was that Mañjusrimūlakalpa does not know the systematic theory of five dhyāni Buddhas and their śaktis. The dating is arrived at after comparing Mañjusrimūlakalpa with Gūhyasamājatantra; the latter states the theory of five Dhyāni Buddhas and their Kūlas; it is therefore later than Mañjusrimūlakalpa. The Gūhyasamājatantra is placed by B. Bhattacharya in the third or fourth century A. D. and its authorship is attributed by him to Aśaṅga.<sup>39</sup>

Winternitz<sup>40</sup> criticised this views at length and said that Mañjusrimūlakalpa has not much to do with Gūhyasamājatantra ; the former is a Vaipulyasūtra of Mahāyāna while the later is a Mahāgūhya-tantra-rajā, Winternitz, Jayasawal and Dutta suggested 8th century A.D.<sup>41</sup>

It should suffice to indicate the appearance of Tantras before the 7th century A.D. But Winternitz emphatically maintained that the word "Tantra" ought to be restricted to the texts connected with Śakti worship.<sup>42</sup> Tantra texts in this sense cannot be proved to have existed before the 7th century. Hiuen-tsang in Si-yu-ki<sup>47</sup> describes the image of Isvara and goddess Bhīmā i.e. Bhīmādevi or Durgā, spouse of Śiva Maheśvara, in the state of Gandhāra. From this we can place the date of Tantric Buddhism about 7th century A. D.

### SEATS OF TANTRIK BUDDHISM :

In the Tantras there is a tradition about the four famous seats or pīṭhas where esoteric doctrine and Śakti worship were first revealed. In the Sāadhanamālā are mentioned the four pīṭhas or sacred spots are 1) Kāmākhyā, 2) Śrihaṭṭa, 3) Uḍḍiyāna and 4) Puṇḍragiri. These are sometimes called Śāktapiṭhas owing to the legend associated with the corpse of Śakti. Of the four pīṭhas, Kāmākhyā has been identified with Kāmarupa, Śrihaṭṭa with Sylhet, Puṇḍragiri is most likely identical with Puṇḍragiri in Nainital District of U.P. Much controversy has been raised over the location of Uḍḍiyāna or Udyāna. B. Bhattacharya following H.P. Shastri, identified it with Orissa, Waddell, Lévi, Tucci and Bagchi<sup>48</sup> have convincingly shown that the Tibetan name Urgyan and the Chinese name Wutchang correspond to Uḍḍiyāna which is identical with modern Swat Valley



in the extreme North West of India. Uḍḍiyāna is mentioned in the Sādhnamālā rather frequently. The earliest manuscript of the Sādhnamālā is dated in the Newari Era 285 which is equivalent to A. D. 1165. In this work, Uḍḍiyāna is connected with the Sādhana of Kurukullā, Trailokyavaṣṁkāra, Mārici and Vajrayoginī. The Sādhnamālā also connects Uḍḍiyāna with such Tantric authors as Saraha. The Jñānasiddhi of Indrabhūti is stated in the last colophon as having started from Uḍḍiyāna.

Uḍḍiyāna being one of the four Pīthas, sacred to Vajrayoginī should be at least near Kāmākhyā (Kāmarūpa) and Śrīhaṭṭa (Sylhet) in Assam and it is not unusual to think that all these four Pīthas received their sanctity from temples dedicated to Vajrayoginī. Thus Uḍḍiyāna has to be located in the eastern and Assam area.<sup>49</sup> In the mediaeval period when Tantras flourished in Vaṅga and Sarmāṭa were two important centres of culture in Bengal. Bengal is borne out by the numerous Buddhist and Brahmanical images of the Tantric types discovered in the whole of the region. Numerous old inscriptions remains of old buildings, coins and terracottas found in these regions. Tantricism of the Buddhists therefore originated in Uḍḍiyāna-Vajrayoginī and thence was transmitted to the rest of India.

### **SIDDHAS :**

Tantrics recognised long before the present age that psychic culture is the utmost importance in life. The Tantrics who were the advocates of psychic culture, used to obtain supernormal powers which were known as Siddhis. Those who gained such Siddhis were called Siddhas and the process through which they obtained Siddhis was called Sādhana. Later works mention more and Brahmasaṁvāda Purāṇa mentions thirty four kinds of Siddhis including eight already mentioned in the Yogasūtra. The Siddhis who attain supernormal powers were considered to be three distinct varieties, the Best, the Middling and the mild. The first and second class were known as Mahāsiddhas and in India their number was recognized as eighty four. Most of these Mahāsiddhas flourished during the Pāla period (8th to 12th century A. D.). Tārānātha says that during the time of the Pāla kings of Bengal many Siddhacāryas appeared and diffused the Tantric teachings after the time of Dharmakīrti. The Anuttarayoga Tantras appeared in the following order : 1) Saraha's Buddhakalpa Tantra, 2) Luipada's Yoginisamyaya, 3) Kambala and Padmavajra produced the Hevajratāntra, 4) Kṛṣṇa's Sampatāṭilaka, 5) Lalitavajra's Kṛṣṇa-

Yamaritantra, 6) Gambhira Vajra's Vajrāmṛta, 7) Kukkurī's Mahāmāyā and 8) Pito's Kālacakra. This account is given by Tāranatha in his Chos-hbyum.

G. Tucci<sup>50</sup> brought to light some interesting details concerning the Siddhas given in a Nepalese palm leaf manuscript discovered by him. This biography of Siddhas is unfortunately very fragmentary and cannot be of much help in setting the complicated and confused history and chronology of the Siddhas. This Sanskrit biography of the Siddhas shows that Nāgārjuna who was alchemist was a contemporary of Sabhara and Advayavajra. This work thus points to a different line of teachers which claimed Nāgārjuna as its head.

Rāhula Samkrtyāyana<sup>51</sup> has reconstructed the genealogy and chronology of the Siddhas on the basis of the Curāśitisiddha-pravṛtti, preserved in the Tañjur and has supplemented his account by other sources. The historicity of the 84 Siddhas of Tantrik Buddhism is indicated not only by a number of Indian and Tibetan legends and traditions but also by some historical inferences to them. Besides, the works of Tāranatha Sumpa, the Blue Annals, the Curāśitisiddha pravṛtti, a Sanskrit biography and many other Tibetan works written after Bu-ston and before Sumpa-mukhan-po, also refer to their life and works. The Sabaratantra gives a list of 24 teachers of the Kāpalika Sect and Nāgārjuna, Minanātha, Gorakṣa, Corpaṭa and Jalandhara are included in the list.<sup>52</sup> A large number of Siddhas are known from the Tantric works, Sādhanaś, Dohās and commentaries extant in Tibetan,<sup>53</sup> Sanskrit and Apabhraṃṣa. The list of 84 Siddhas is preserved in the Tibetan sources. Most of the scholars agree in placing the 84 Siddhas between the eighth and twelfth centuries A. D. It is extremely difficult to decide how many of these 84 Buddhist sages flourished in the 8th century is a confused and complex one.<sup>54</sup>

B. Bhattacharya was perhaps the first to make such an attempts. He placed Saraha in 633A. D. a date which is too early and perhaps cannot be substantiated by any undisputed evidence.<sup>55</sup> There are indications that lead us to place Saraha or Rāhulabhadra in the later half of the 8th century A. D., According to Sumpa-mkhan-po, was a brāhmana born in the city of Rajni in the east and flourished in the reign of king Candranāpāla of Prācyā. In Rāhula Samkrtyāyana's list Saraha seems to belong to Nālandā and was a contemporary of king Dharmapāla (770-813 A.D.) According to Tāranatha, Rāhulabhadra alias Saraha was a brāhmana of Oḍiṣa.<sup>55</sup>

From the Tibetan Teñjur, Saraha appears to be a contemporary of Sānta-rakṣita and Kamalaśīla. Almost all the Tibetan sources agree on the point that Saraha's pupil was Nāgārjuna.<sup>56</sup> When we fix the date of Saraha, we fix the date of some of the earliest Siddhas; Saraha, the first of the 84 Siddhas seems to have flourished in the middle of the 8th century A. D. One of his direct pupils the Vajrayāna mysticism was Nāgārjuna. There were several persons bearing this name and Tibetan sources are full of confused legends concerning this name. In Samkṛtyāyana's list Nāgārajuna appears as a pupil of Saraha and a brāhmana of Kañci in the South.<sup>57</sup> The Blue Annals attribute to Nāgārajuna the introduction of Gūhyasamāja in South India.<sup>58</sup>

The whole problem of the history and chronology of the 84 Siddhas is a confused and complex one. H. P. Sastri held that the Tantric works collected in the Bauddha Gan-o-Doha<sup>59</sup> were the products of the 10th Century. The authors of these Dohas are mostly Siddhas. S. K. Chatterjee<sup>60</sup> also placed the Buddhist Caryāpadas in the 10th Century and after. P. C. Bagchi was of the opinion that Luipa was the same name of Matsyendranātha and that most of the Siddhas lived in the 11th Century A.D.

#### DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES OF THE TANTRIC BUDDHISM :

The Buddhist esoteric treatises describe the Truth in negative terms; the terms 'Sūnyatā', 'Vijñāṇa citta' and the compounds 'nairātmya' frequently occur in connection with ceremonies and yogic practices. These texts do not occur to be concerned so much with metaphysics as with the practical implications of the philosophical ideas of Mahāyāna. The description of Bodhicitta given in the second chapter, of Gūhyasamājantra is thoroughly permeated by the ideas of the Sūnyavāda as well as of Vijñānavāda. Thus it is bereft of all existence, free from Skandhas, dhātus and āyatanas, object and subject and because of substancelessness and sameness of dharmas, it is from the beginning unborn and devoid of existence.

The Hevajratantra gives a negative description of the Reality (tattva) "In reality there is neither form nor seer, neither sound nor hearer, there is neither smell, nor one who smells, neither taste nor tester; neither touch nor one who touches neither thought nor thinker (Hevajra-tantra pt.I, p. 68).<sup>61</sup>

The ultimate Reality, says Indrabhuti is "unsupported like the sky, all pervasive and devoid of characteristics; it is highest Reality and the unique Vajrajñāna. It is known as Mahāmudrā,

Sāmantabhadra and Dharmakāya; it is ideal to be known and knowledge itself.” (Jñānasiddhi, 1, 47-48)

The Vajrayāna sages speak of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa in the same vein in which Nāgārjuna the Great characterised them. In actual experience the nature of the world is identical with the nature of the Tathāgata; Tathāgata is devoid of any essence, in this world. Tathāgata is free from all concepts and thought constructions.<sup>62</sup> The Vajrayānists call the Saṃsāra as a condition of the mind which is enveloped with the darkness born of innumerable false ideations, is as ephemeral as the lightening in a storm and is besmeared with the dirt of attachment etc. not easily removable (prajñopāyavinīścaya Siddhi IV. 27)<sup>63</sup>. Hence the Vajrayānist further holds that ‘the excellent nirvāṇa is another condition of the mind when the latter is bright and luminous, free from conceptual excretions that envelop it; the mind then becomes the foremost Reality which is neither objective and subjective (Prajñopāya vinīścaya siddhi VI. 28-29). Advayaṃvaja, a late Vajrayāna saint and scholar, says that in Esoteric system, ‘Sunyata is described as Vajra because it is firm and sound, indivisible, impenetrable, cannot be burnt and cannot be destroyed’.<sup>64</sup>

The supreme being (Sattva) which is the goal and apex of esoteric culture, is often called Vajrasattva. Adayavajra observes that, “by Vajra is meant Śūnyatā and by Sattva is meant jñānamātra. The identity of the two follows from the nature of Vajrasattva,” (Adayavajra Saṃgraha p. 22) In the Hevajratantra we find that “It is indivisible and so known as Vajra”. A being which is a unity of three, because of this device he is known as Vajrasattva. Dharmakīrti a 9th century Tantric Buddhist author and a commentator of Hevajratantra regards the unity as the unity of the three worlds (Kāmadhātu, rūpadhātu and arūpadhātu) which is attained in the state of Voidness (Śūnyatā). One is often tempted to understand Vajrasattva as monotheistic God-head of the esoteric system. He is invoked as such and is described as the Lord and the saviour of the world.

### **SOME SPECIALITY OF TANTRIK BUDDHISM :**

One of the most important aspects of Buddhist Tantrika culture is its emphasis on the female counterpart. We may call it Śakti worship. Most of the Scholars admitted that Śakti-Sādhana is the essence of Tantra.

According to Lama Anāgārika Govinda “the concept of Śakti or Divine power, of the creative female aspect of the highest God or

his emanations does not play any role in Buddhism. The central idea of Tantric Buddhism is prajñās, knowledge, wisdom. To the Buddhist, Śakti is māyā, the very power that creates illusions, from which prajñā can liberate us.<sup>65</sup>

Elsewhere he remarks in this connection that "there is no need to resort to such superficial reason as the necessity to comply with the grammatical gender of Prajñā (feminine) and upāya (masculine)". He thus concluded that the concept of Śakti has no place in Buddhism. In the Hindu Tantra we find Śiva and Śakti are the two. In the Buddhist Tantra, the supreme truth is the unity of the male and female called yab-yum. We read in the Hevajra Tantra that "two-fold in the innate (Sahaja) for wisdom is the woman and the means is the man" The only difference between the Śākta and Buddhist Tantras and in the esoteric Buddhist art the female (yum) or Prajñā is represented embraced by an active male aspect or god often Hevajra or Vajrasattva. In the Śākta Tantras the posture is reversed, Śakti is an active element and the god is passive. Prajñā (wisdom) alone is not central idea even as Upāya (means) alone is insignificant. The ways of Bodhisattva consists in the practice of Prajñopāya; neither Prjñā alone nor Upāya alone. Hence, without wisdom and wisdom without means leads to bondage."

Buddhists does not make any distinction between māyā or saṃsāra and bondage and prajñā stands for Sūnyatā, the realisation of which results in nirvāṇa.

### **PRAJÑOPĀYA :**

The supreme reality is often described as the unity of Prajñā (wisdom) and upāya (means); it is no dual, two-in-one, the state of final realisation. Prajñā is the same as Sūnyatā (Voidness) and upāya is the same as Karuṇā (compassion); these two terms are very well known to Mahāyānasutra.<sup>66</sup> These two elements of wisdom and compassion, constitute the essence of the thought of enlightenment or Bodhicitta. The Bodhisattva fixes his intention on obtaining bodhi or enlightenment and this he does by constantly endeavouring for the liberation of all beings. In Mahāyāna, Bodhicitta is the mind directed towards Enlightenment but in esoteric Buddhism the compound Bodhicitta is of great technical significance and of a complex nature. In short, it is a state of consciousness in which Prajñā and Upāya, female and male, wisdom and means, yogini and yogi, have perfectly comingled. The description of Bodhicitta as detailed in the second chapter of the Guhyasamāja gives a clear idea of its nature in esoteric Buddhism.<sup>67</sup>

It is the utterly indescribable reality, beginningless and endless, neither existent nor non-existent. It is eulogised as the pure tattva, born of non-substantiality, heart of Tathāgata and the giver of Buddha's bodhi.

The same reality is called prajñopāya because of its two constituents, wit, prajñā or wisdom and kṛpā or compassion; they are both absolute and without any support; they commingle together in prajñopāya so entirely and completely as one sky merges into another sky. It is clear that the compound prajñopāya, bodhicitta, Vajrasattva and Advaya stand in Tantrik Buddhism chiefly for the ultimate truth which is the unity of gnosis (female) and means (male).<sup>68</sup>

### MANTRA :

Another important feature of Tantrika Buddhism is Mantra. The term 'Mantra' means a 'hymn' or 'prayer' sacred to a deity; it is also understood to mean a 'spell', a charm or incantation.

H. Zimmer gives a brilliant analysis of the word 'mantra' which is as follows : "In the word 'mantra' he says, the root 'man', 'to think' is combined with the 'tra' which forms tools or words. Thus 'mantra' is a Tool for thinking, a thing which creates a mental picture, with its sound it calls forth its content into a state of immediate reality" (Anāgārika Govinda, Tibetan Mysticism, p. 19, quoted from H. Zimmer, *Ewiges Indien* p. 81). Mantra thus renders thought more tractable; it is a help to meditation and yogic vision (Gopinath Kaviraj *Gorakṣa Siddhanta Saṁgraha* pp. 323 f.) The mantras seem to have been the back bone of Tantrik worship. These mantras as known to us from the esoteric Buddhist texts are almost an invariable, unmeaning compilation of words. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, is full of mantras and their merits. The *Guhyasamāja*<sup>69</sup> devotes one whole chapter to mantra-caryā while the *Hevajratantra* discusses various mantras, their efficacies and methodology in one full chapter besides scattered discussions.<sup>70</sup>

### GURU :

Yogic practice is always indispensable for the attainment of the Bodhicitta. It is said in the *Pañcakarma* that the vows and practices are indeed useless without tattvas; but perfect enlightenment again can never be attained without practice. As the fire in the log of wood never manifests itself without friction, so that Bodhi will never be produced without proper practice. In this practice great importance has been attached to the selection of the preceptor. Preceptor has

to be respected and obeyed as the very incarnation of truth. In esoterism which is concerned with secret, mystic and confidential doctrines and practices, a qualified teacher is indispensable. Accordingly we find the Buddhist esoteric texts<sup>71</sup> eulogizing the guru above everything else. A pupil has to be initiated by a worthy teacher who is well versed in the mysteries of the Vajrayāna. The Hevajratāntra declares that "even when he has attained to Siddhi and is resplendent in his perfect knowledge, a disciple respectfully greets his master, if he wished to avoid the avici hell". The Jñānasiddhi repeatedly mentions the characteristics of the guru and at one place the disciple eulogizes his preceptor in superlative terms.<sup>72</sup> (Jñānasiddhi, pp. 12, 71, 72) This guru-vāda in India was current from a very old time.<sup>73</sup> After securing a suitable preceptor and also a suitable Prajñā (woman) the yogin should approach the reversed guru and propitiate him by worship, hymns. Then follows the ceremony of Abhiṣek or initiation into the cult. In some texts we find Mantras for four kinds of Abhiṣek viz. Kalasa Abhiṣeka (i.e. initiation by outward purification by the water of the jar etc.), Guhya-bhiṣeka (initiation into the Secret cult), Prajñā-bhiṣeka (initiation to perfect wisdom) and Vajrābhiṣeka (initiation to the adamant truth). It is laid down that the excellent truth can be obtained only through the kindness and grace of one's teacher, otherwise the fools remain deluded for a long time.

### MAṆḌALA :

Maṇḍala literally means 'round', 'circular', charmed circle' halo round a figure', such as of any god. But technically and in esoteric Buddhism maṇḍala implies one of the subtlest concepts of Indian mysticism. In the Guhyasamāja,<sup>74</sup> the maṇḍala is created by the five Dhyāni Buddhas, their emanations, female counterparts, spiritual sons and guardians of the four quarters.

Tucci<sup>75</sup> has given an excellent interpretation of the esoteric theory and practice of maṇḍala in a language intelligible to modern mind. A maṇḍala he says "delineates a consecrated superficies and protects it from invasion by disintegrating forces symbolized in demoniacal cycles" This correspond to the five constituent elements of the human personality; they further correspond to the five members of the holy pentad (Pañcadhyāni Buddhas) Aksobhya, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi-just as the macrocosm corresponds in the microcosm, so that quinary complex corresponds to the internal, spiritual quinary principle.<sup>76</sup>

## THE FIVE DHYĀNI BUDDHAS :

Although the Mahāyāna Buddhists had long been worshipping Buddhas, Bodhi-Sattvas, some demi-gods and arhats, yet the evolution of a Buddhist pantheon, is attributable to the Tantric Buddhists. In the Hevajratantra the following arrangements of the five Buddhas and their associations is given. Akṣobhya has for the name of his family Vajra, the yogini affiliated to him is Vajra or Dombi and his family symbol is Viśvavajra. Vairocana has Tathāgata as the name of the family, Brāhmaṇi as Yogini, Cakra as symbol. Amitabha's family is called Padma, yogini Nartī, symbol Padma. Ratnasambhava's family is Ratna family, yogini Caṇḍālī, symbol ratna. Amoghasiddhi's family is called Karma, yogini Rajakī and symbol Khaḍga.<sup>77</sup> Akṣobhya's colour is black, of Vairocana white, of Amoghasiddhi dark green, of Ratnasambhava yellow, and of Amitabha red. These are described as five families or classes." He who practices the yoga of Heruka should frequent the five classes. These five classes that are associated together, he conceives, as of one".<sup>78</sup> The five Buddhas are said to represent, among other things, five skandhas of our existence.<sup>79</sup>

## MAHĀSUKHA :

The Buddhist conception of Nirvāṇa is envisaged as Mahāsukha in this esoteric system. Through a fully developed theory of Nirvāṇa as mahāsukha, 'intense bliss' or 'great delight' was elaborated by the Sahajayānists.<sup>80</sup> Yet the conception of mahāsukha as the goal of spiritual endeavour is found also in some esoteric texts. Mahāsukha as the goal of spiritual endeavour is found also in some esoteric texts. Mahāsukha is the essential nature of the final Truth in Vajrayāna called Bhagavān Vajrasattva; that is to say, the ultimate is of the nature of great Bliss. This is the state of unity of Śūnyata, Karuṇā or prajñā or upāya; mahāsukha is prajñopāya.<sup>81</sup> This is clear from the fact that sometimes goddess Nairātma is represented in tight embracement with Lord Heruka or the goddess Varāhi with Lord Mahāsukha.<sup>82</sup> Mahāsukha is the wisdom of all the Tathāgatas, by nature and self-knowable; it is the supreme bliss among all forms of bliss.<sup>83</sup> 'Saraha' says that Mahāsukha is essenceless, indescribable, devoid of self and not self.<sup>84</sup>

## ESOTERIC MASTER'S ROLE ON SOCIETY :

When we read the biographies of Siddhas recorded by the Tibetan chroniclers and translators we realize the striking revolutionary and unconventional social circle of Tantrika teachers and followers. The Tantras seem to have spread among the outcastes and carefree



wanderers. Hevajrat Tantra refers to such circles of yogins and yoginis, their meeting places, performing esoteric practices, drinking wine and blood. They used their 'special language' and secret signs so that "the malicious outsiders and wanderers would be bewildered."<sup>85</sup>

Tantrika movement was accelerated chiefly by the members of the lower orders of the society. This movement succeeded in raising some of the lowliest of men to the status of 'adepts' or perfect on Siddhas. These teachers who wandered free from convention and social taboos, did teach their teachings and doings that there is practically no distinction between a brāhmaṇa and a domba, a king and a slave. Some of them like Saraha, who was a brāhmaṇa by caste, became voluntary an out-caste, by marrying a girl of an arrow maker. In his first dohā, Saraha attacks his own former caste. The Brahmanic practices of study, Saṃskāras and rituals are ridiculed openly. According to H. Kern, "tantrism is, so to say, a popularized and at the same time, degraded form of yoga because the objects are commonly of a coarser character and the practices partly more childish, partly revolting."<sup>86</sup> R. L. Mitra declared that "no goodpurpose would be served by dwelling further on the absurd and often disgusting prescriptions of such works as the Tathāgataguhya."<sup>87</sup> Charles Eliot held that "the details of Śāktism are an unprofitable study."<sup>88</sup> Winternitz and La Vallée Poussin, do not seem to have appreciated the language and style of the Tantras. Winternitz<sup>89</sup> found in them an "unsavoury mixture of mysticism, occult pseudo-science, magic and erotics." La Vallée Poussin frankly attributed to Tantrism "disgusting practices, both obscene and criminal."<sup>90</sup> B. Bhattacharya stigmatizes the Tantras as example of "the worst immortality and sin, and Tantricism as a disease."<sup>91</sup> He may be justified in such a wholesale condemnation of Tantricism. It is true that the Vajrayāna yogin is said to have attained final Nirvāṇa in the blissful embrace of a young girl.<sup>92</sup> It is stated that the Buddhahood resides in the female organ, that lust is crushed by lust; and that there can be no liberation without a female partner.

According to Tucci, apart from some exceptions "The tantras contain one of the highest expressions of Indian Mysticism which may appear to us rather strange in its outward form, chiefly because we do not always understand the symbolical language in which they are written."<sup>93</sup> Tucci in his excellent work on the maṇḍalas, compares the symbols of the Tantras with those of Upaniṣhads. It is generally believed that the abuses of Tantrika practices may have resulted in moral degeneration and the decline of Buddhism.

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## AYODHYĀKĀṇḌA—THE CRITICAL EDITION : A STUDY

Asim Kumar Chatterjee

Ayodhyākāṇḍa (ed. by P.L. Vaidya, Baroda, 1960) is the second Book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and its critical edition has altogether 111 chapters and in size, it is second only to the Yuddhakāṇḍa. In this dissertation, we will try to assess the historical importance of this Book of the lesser Epic.

The Ayodhyākāṇḍa, it should be pointed out, is deeply connected with the Vedas, on the one hand, and the Buddhist canonical texts, on the other. Let us see how far the Vedas have influenced this Book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The father of Daśaratha's second wife, and at the same time, the most favourite and beautiful queen Kaikeyī, was none other than Aśvapati, who plays an important role both in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*<sup>1</sup> and the *Chāndogya Upanishad*.<sup>2</sup> This particular monarch of Kekaya, was evidently an ideal king, who was, not only an extremely learned man, but at the same time, a model administrator. In the relevant lines of the *Chāndogya*, he claims that in his kingdom, there is no thief, no drunkard, no man of bad character etc. etc.

*na me steno janapade na kadāryo na madyapo  
nānāhitāgnimauidvāṇna svairī svairīṇi kutaḥ* 5.11.5.

The Ayodhyākāṇḍa, in another passage, depicts this remarkable king as *dharma-rāt* and *dhīmat*, which fully proves that the Vedic representation of Aśvapati was known to the poet of the Ayodhyākāṇḍa. We are further told by the Upanishadic Writer of the *Chāndogya*<sup>4</sup> that the Kekaya monarch Aśvapati was the teacher of five learned Vedic Brahmins, who were taught the true nature of Vaisvānara Agni and these five Brahmins have been given the following names Prācīnaśāla Aupamanyava, Satyayajña Paulushi, Indradyumna Bhāllaveya, Jana Śārkarākshya and Vuḍiḷa Aśvatarāśvin. These five Vedic Brahmins first went to Uddālaka Āruṇi and then all six (including Uddālaka) approached Aśvapati, who then gave them suitable lessons on the nature of Vaisvānara Agni. Bharata, when he learnt about the role of his mother Kaikeyī, in the banishment of Rāma, uttered the following words<sup>5</sup> in utter disgust and sorrow —

*na tvamaśvapateḥ kanyā dharmarājasya dhīmataḥ  
rākshasī tatra jātāsī kulapradhvarṣinī pituḥ*

Indeed, Bharata refused to believe that his own mother, who was the daughter of such great a king, as Aśvapati, could become so mean and deceitful.

Let us now return to another significant chapter of the Ayodhyākāṇḍa. In our critical edition, the concerned chapter is number 22. Here we find Rāma's mother Kausalyā, invoking a few deities, who according to her, could save her son from demons and other inauspicious spirits, in the forests of Daṇḍakāraṇya. Exactly this chapter was used by the Buddhist Jātaka poet; and the concerned Jātaka is the *Jayaddisa Jātaka*.<sup>6</sup> Both the Ayodhyā kāṇḍa poet and the poet of the *Jayaddisa Jātaka* invoke gods like Soma, Varuṇa, Prajāpati, Candra, Sūrya etc., for Rāma, in the Daṇḍaka forest. The Gītā press edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* refers to more deities in this connexion. Rāma's 'fair-limbed mother' is also distinctly mentioned. We are quoting the relevant English verses of Cowell's translation<sup>7</sup> —

Kings Varuṇa and Soma hight  
Brahmā and lords of day and night  
As Rāma's fair-limbed mother won  
Salvation for her absent son  
When woods of Daṇḍaka he sought  
So far my child is freedom wrought  
And by this Act of truth, I've charmed,  
The gods to bring the home unharmed".

We have to remember that, according to Cowell himself, the verse section of the Jātakas are much earlier than the prose-section, which was probably composed by Buddhaghosha himself, who flourished in the early Gupta period. Cowell is further of the opinion, that some of the Jātaka-verses, may even be pre-Buddhistic. But unfortunately for us, in no Indian script, the prose Jātaka is available; the present writer has a copy of the two-volume Nālandā edition of the verse-Jātaka (1959), which is of immense help to this writer.

From much earlier times, the Sanskrit classical writers are using the Ayodhyā kāṇḍa; and in this connexion, we can refer to the extremely well-known *Pratimā-nāṭaka* of Bhāsa, where that great dramatist has fully used the Ayodhyā kāṇḍa; but he has made some minor changes. For example, Bharata has been represented as the younger brother, and Lakshmaṇa as the elder brother.<sup>8</sup> However, the playwright has done enough justice to the Ādikavi by representing Sītā as a great heroine, and Bharata as a supremely devoted brother

of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa He is disgusted with his mother Kaikeyī, by comparing her with a *Kunadī* between the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā<sup>9</sup> (meaning Kausalyā and Sumitrā).

We are of the opinion that the heart of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the Ayodhyākāṇḍa; and naturally our Sanskrit, Pali and even later writers have used this Book of the *Rāmāyaṇa* freely. And this is the reason why the longest Jātaka, namely *Vessantara Jātaka*<sup>10</sup> has borrowed details from this Book. This particular Jātaka has been mentioned several times in the pre-Christian epigraphs, for example, Bharhut, Sanchi and even Jamalgarhi and Goli (district Guntur, Andhra Pradesh). There are many references to this popular Jātaka, as we learn from the *Nidānakathā*<sup>11</sup> As we have already noticed, both Rāma and Sītā are directly mentioned in the verse-section (*gāthā*) of this Jātaka. It is also clear from the relevant verses of this Jātaka, that the entire *Rāmāyaṇa* was more or less known to the poets of this Jātaka. The relevant passage of the *Vessantara Jātaka*<sup>12</sup> runs as follows —

*avaruddhassāhaṃ bhariyā rājaputtassa Śīrīmato  
taṃ cāhaṃ nātimaññmi Rāmaṃ Sītā vanubbatā*

This passage fully explodes the theory of some of our Western historians, including the writer of the *Cambridge History of India* (Vol. I) that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is a post-Buddhist poem. We will have something more to say on this point, later in this article.

Let us discuss another important Jātaka, which has deep connexion with our Ayodhyākāṇḍa. The extremely well-known *Daśaratha Jātaka* has to be fully analysed in this connexion. The present writer has elsewhere<sup>13</sup> shown that the entire *Daśaratha Jātaka* is nothing but a summary of the Ayodhyākāṇḍa. Here also the earlier writers have nothing to do with the later prose-section of this Jātaka, which was written in the Gupta period. The writer of this section was probably Buddhaghosha, who flourished some 900 years after Buddha. And if he was not Buddhaghosha, he should be a still later commentator.

The *Daśaratha Jātaka* (No. 461) appears to be a poor imitation of the Ayodhyākāṇḍa. Here like the poem of Vālmiki, Rāma is the eldest brother, but the prose-portion of this Jātaka has given rise to great confusion. Daśaratha has here been represented as the king of Vārāṇasī, and not Ayodhyā; there is no reference to Satrugna, who has been repeatedly mentioned even in the critical edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, published from M.S. University, Vadodra

(Baroda). The prose commentary makes Rāma and Sītā brother and sister, which is more baffling. Some western scholars have tried to show that in ancient India, like Egypt, the marriage between brother and sister was allowed. But nowhere in the Indian literature, such a practice has been mentioned. Āśvaghosha, who lived several centuries before the author of the *Jātakatṭhakathavannanā* (being a contemporary of Kanishka I), in his *Saundarānanda*,<sup>14</sup> never makes the mistake regarding Sītā; like Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, he gives Sītā, the epithet Maithilī. The *Māhābhārata* (cr. ed. Pune) follows Vālmiki; and even the *Jānakīharaṇa* of Kumāradasa, a Śrilankan poet, closely follows the same tradition. This Kumāradasa, lived a century after Buddhaghosha; and thus he too, goes against the ridiculous tales told by the author of the prose-section of the *Daśaratha Jātaka*. We are happy to note that the Śrilankan poet of the *Jānakīharaṇa* was not influenced by that biased account regarding Rāma's relationship with Sītā.

As R.G. Bhandarkar, had shown long ago, the Buddhist account about several Hindu religious figures like Vāsudeva and others are extremely ridiculous and downright defamatory.<sup>15</sup> A few Hindu deities like Lakshmī, Sarasvatī and Vaiśravaṇa were accepted. Even the greatest Ṛgvedic god Indra has been delineated as a Yaksha; and same was the fate of both Viṣṇu<sup>16</sup> and Śiva.

Let us turn our attention to other details, preserved in the critical edition of this Book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. We have an extremely interesting character in the person of Guha, who was the king of Śṛṅgaverapura, and who apparently belonged to the Nishāda caste.<sup>17</sup> It appears from the relevant chapters of this Book that this low-born forest-chief was a feudatory of Daśaratha; but, at the same time, he was a close friend of our hero (*Rāmasyātmasamaḥ Sakhā*).<sup>18</sup> *Kaivarta* (78.7), *Sthapati* (78.11), *Dāśa*, (78.6) *Gahanagocara* (79.5) etc. are the adjectives given to Guha. Afterwards the Kaivartas played an important role in the political affairs of Northern Bengal, which shows that they remained an important section of the Indian political life from Buddhist times, down to a very late period. But here we have practically no scope to discuss this point. Another thing, which should be noted in this connexion is that the followers of this non-Aryan chieftain, were connected with river-boats, and they defended their kingdom by their supremacy in naval affairs; in any case, we will afterwards see, that in the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* (113.4), we find Hanumat meeting Guha, where too, he is given the adjective *gahanagocara*. The word *sthapati*, applied to Guha, means a "king".<sup>18A</sup> The same Guha was



even ready to confront the vast army of Bharata, when he was approaching Śrīgaverapura (Ayodhyā, 79.7). But when he came to know about Bharata's real intention, he uttered these words —

*dhanyastvaṃ na tvayā tulyaṃ paśyāmi jagatītale*

*ayatnādāgataṃ rājyaṃ yastvaṃ tyaktumihecchasi*

*Śasvatī khalu te kīrtilokānanucarishyati* (Ayodhyā) 79.12-13.

Another very interesting character in this Book is that of Brahmin Trijaṭa, who has been represented, in a few verses of our present critical edition (29.22-27), as a great Muni, but at the same time, a poverty-stricken, married person,<sup>19</sup> blest with a large number of children.<sup>20</sup> When the news spread, that prince Rāma, before his departure for forest, was distributing money to the poor people, he came to our hero and told him about his poverty. At first, Rāma did not give any importance to his prayer, and mockingly asked him to throw his *daṇḍa*, as far as possible; and that the Brahmin of Garga lineage (Gārgya) surprised Rāma by showing his physical power, and was rewarded with a large number of cows, by that prince.<sup>21</sup> Trijaṭa's case proves that even Brahmins, belonging to the highest caste, were economically not well-off; and such examples of poor Brahmins are everywhere in the *Pañcatantra*, the *Jātakas* and the *Kathāsaritsāgara*.

We have now to analyse the character of some of the ladies, who are mostly represented in this Book of our critical edition; and naturally Kaikeyī comes first. We have already seen, that she was the daughter of Aśvapati, belonging to a great family of the ancient Punjab. Aśvapati was not only a great king, but at the same time, a remarkable Vedic scholar, capable of instructing even learned Vedic Brāhmaṇas. In one of my papers, published long ago, in *Journal of Indian History*,<sup>22</sup> I gave some details regarding Aśvapati, of the Vedic fame; and naturally, as this Book shows, he was an exact contemporary of both Daśaratha and Sitā's father Janaka, who according to the Purāṇas, was Sīradhvaja Janaka.

Kaikeyī was an extremely good-looking lady, and naturally, she was the dearest wife of the old Daśaratha. At first Kaikeyī had great love for Rāma, and she was the happiest person, when she heard from her maid-servant Mantharā, regarding Daśaratha's decision to make Rāma the crown-prince;<sup>23</sup> and Rāma, on his part, had great respect for this lady. When the hunch-backed maidservant gave the news of Rāma's coronation as *yuvarāja* to her, she became delirious with joy, and offered ornaments to Kubjā.<sup>24</sup> This shows that originally Kaikeyī was not that bad;

unfortunately, Mantharā did the trick, and Kaikeyī changed her nature, and forced Daśaratha to send Rāma to Daṇḍakāraṇya. By doing this, she even lost the love and respect of her only son, for whom, she did everything Mantharā wanted. Afterwards, even the poet Vālmīki rarely refers to her, and only the other two queens of Daśaratha are mentioned. But the great-hearted Rāma never refers to her disparagingly. He has nothing but respect for her. As we have already seen, Bharata never forgave his mother, for conspiring against Rāma.

Another entirely different woman of the Ayodhyākāṇḍa is Anasuyā, who appears only in the last three chapters of the Ayodhyākāṇḍa (109-111). This lady is represented as the wife of R̥shi Atri. She has been described as extremely old yet devoted woman, with great love for her husband. Sītā also shows her great respect for this lady, who asks her to remain faithful to her great husband; and in this connexion, the following *Śloka* by Vālmīki is to be noted —

*Śithilāṁ valitām vṛddhāṁ jarāpāṇḍuramūrdhajāṁ  
salatāṁ vepanānāṅgīṁ pravāte kadālī yathā*<sup>25</sup>

She is surely a model for all traditional women of India, full of goodness and humility; even for a lady like Sītā, Anasuyā is a good instructress, as she advises her to wear the best dress before going to bed in the night-times and her sole advice to our heroine is to become a good companion of Rāma (Rāmasyānucārī bhava).<sup>26</sup>

It is a fact that the critical edition of the Ayodhyākāṇḍa ignores Buddha, although a few editions of this text, mentions Buddha and dismisses him as *nāstika*. As a matter of fact, even the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* ignores the founder of Buddhism and only in the critical text of the *Harivaṁśa*,<sup>27</sup> we have Buddha and among the early Purāṇas, only the *Matsya*<sup>28</sup> has Buddha in the list of *Avatāras* of Viṣṇu. The later Purāṇas like Agni, knows Buddha. But the fact remains, Buddha was accepted as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, only in the early Gupta period.

The geographical details, given in this Book of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are invaluable and we have discussed these, elsewhere, in the pages of *Journal of Ancient Indian History* (Calcutta University).<sup>29</sup> We have to remember that Valmīki, himself lived near the river Tamasā, which is not far from Ayodhyā, and he had good knowledge, regarding the modern Uttar Pradesh, and parts of eastern Madhya Pradesh. He had also good idea regarding Punjab. And since Aśvapati's capital was known to him, we will grudgingly

admit that a large part of modern Punjab, was also known to our poet. The poet has not shown much acquaintance with the greater part of Western Madhya Pradesh; but all these things are outside our present dissertation.

Another important item of the Ayodhyākāṇḍa will have to be analysed in this connexion. We have already opined that there is no trace of Buddhism, anywhere in this Book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Jābāli, who according to some, was an atheist, was never a Buddhist. In the critical edition he is not called Buddhist. Even poet himself, considers Rāma as a distant king of bygone days. This is amply shown by the delineation of Rāma as ruling for 16,000 years,<sup>30</sup> which is much more than 11,000 years, given in the original *Rāmāyaṇa*.<sup>31</sup> It is extremely significant that like the critical edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*,<sup>32</sup> the verse *Daśaratha Jātaka*<sup>33</sup> has the epithets *Kambuḡīya* and *māhābahu* for Rāma all taken from the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

We have already seen that the Ayodhyākāṇḍa has nothing to do either with untouchability or caste prejudices. The Munikumāra, inadvertently killed by Daśaratha,<sup>34</sup> was not a Brahmin; he was the son of Śūdra woman, by Vaiśya father.<sup>35</sup> But in the 7th Book of the same text, we find Daśaratha's son Rāma killing a Śūdra ascetic, only for confessing that he was a Śūdra.<sup>36</sup> And this is not merely a story, fabricated by Smṛti writers; the killing of Śūdra Śambūka, by Rāma, is also corroborated by the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*<sup>37</sup> —

*Śrūyate Śambūke Śūdre hate Brāhmaṇadārakaḥ*

*Jivito dharmamāsādyā Rāmātsatyaparākramāt*

Therefore, we do feel, that what was looked upon as a serious offence, at the time of Daśaratha, was merely dismissed as royal duty, at the time of Rāma. Śambūka was as much a non-dvija, as was the young *tāpasa*, who was accidentally by Daśaratha.

Compared to the Yuddhakāṇḍa, the Ayodhyākāṇḍa is somewhat shorter (111 chapters) Book. The Yuddhakāṇḍa has 116 chapters; but the Ayodhyākāṇḍa seems to be a superior work of Art. We have opined that this Book is the heart of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and this is the reason why the poet of the *Daśaratha Jātaka* has decided to imitate this Book. Āsvaghosha, too, it appears, was influenced by this Kāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyaṇa*; and same was the case with Bhāsa, whose *Pratimānātaka* appears to be an unforgettable play, where the real hero is Bharata and not Rāma.

Note & Reference :

1. See *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, X. 6.1.2; See also *Sacred Books of The East*, Vol. XLIII, p. 393 (ed. Max Müller).
2. *Ch. Up.* 5.11.5.
3. See 68.9 (cr. ed).
4. See *Chândogya up.* 5.11.5.
5. 68.9.
6. See Nālandā edition *Jātakapāli* (No. 513). I. p. 368) In the Roman edition, the Pali expression is *Daṇḍakāraṇṇa* and in the Nālandā edition, the word is *Daṇḍakirāṇṇo*.
7. See Cowell, *Jātaka Stories*, Vol. V. pp. 15-16.
8. Chowkhamba edition of *Pratimā*, 4th Act (p. 108).
9. Ibid. 3rd Act (p. 91) *mama mātuśca mātuśca madhyamastha tvarṇa śobhase Gaṅgāyamunayormadhye Kunadīva praveśitā*.
10. See E.R. Cowell, *The Jātaka*, Vol. VI, pp. 246-305 (No. 547) the present writer has used the reprint, published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1973; it was originally published by Cambridge University Press, 1895.
11. The *Nidānakathā* (Chowkhamba) knows the *Vessantara Jātaka* p. 220 (Varanasi, 1970); this shows that it is one of the earliest *Jātakas* and probably composed in the pre-Mauryan period.
12. See *Jātakapāli* (Nālandā), II, p. 375.
13. See *Ancient Indian Literary Cultural Tradition* (Kolkata, 1974), p. 22.
14. See *Saundarānanda* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi), I, 26.
15. See *Valshnavism, Saivism* etc.
16. See *Mahāmāyūrī* translated by D.C. Sircar in *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, Vol. 5, p. 270.
17. See 78.1.
18. See 44.9 "Rāmasyātmasamaḥ sakhā".
- 18A. See V.S. Apte, the *Student's Sanskrit Dictionary* (1970), Delhi, p. 621.
19. Cf. the expression *Sabhāryo* (29.27).
20. See 29.23 *nirdhano bahuputro'smī*; In the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, the poor lady Piṅgalikā tells the queen (Vāsavadattā) of Udayana that the poor people have always a large number of children —

- tataḥ Piṅgalikā avadiddevi duhkhyā jāyate  
 praeyam pāpabhuyishthā daridrāsveda bhuyasi  
 (see *Kathāsaritasāgara*, 4.1.137); see also *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. III,  
 p. 135.
21. See *Ayodhyā* (cr. ed). 29.27.
22. *J.I.H.* (Trivandrum),
23. *Ayodhyā*, 7.29.
24. *Ayodhyā* (cr. ed), 7. 27-29.
25. *Ibid.*, 109.18.
26. *Ibid.*, 111.10.
27. See *Harivaṁśa* (critical text only), Bhayishya-parvan, Poona, 1976,  
 116.15—*Sūdrā dharmāṁ carishyanti Śākyabuddhopajivinaḥ*. This  
 particular *parvan* appears to be a late one, as it also refers to  
 Pushyamitra Śuṅga, who flourished in the second century B.C.  
 116.40.
28. See *Matsya*, 47.247 (Panchanan Tarkaratna)
29. See *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, Vol.
30. See *Nālandā* edition of Verse *Jātaka*, 1, p. 230.
31. See critical Edition (Baroda), I, 1.76.  
*daśavarshasahasrāṇi daśavarshaśatāni ca*  
*Rāmo rājyamupāsītvā Brahmaloḥkaṁ gamiṣhyati*
32. I. 1.9.
33. See *Jātaka* No. 461 (*Daśaratha Jātaka*), 1959, *Nālandā*, p. 230.
34. See *Ayodhyā* (cr. ed), 57.21ff.
35. 57.37.  
*na dvijātīrahaṁ rājan mā bhūt te manaso vyathā*  
*Śūdrayāmasmi Valsyaena jāto Janapadādhipa*
36. See the Critical edition of *Uttarakāṇḍa*, 67.4.
37. *Mbh* (cr. ed. Poona), 12, 149.62.

## CONTINUATION OF ANCIENT CONCEPTS OF CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Subid Chatterjee

Arunachal Pradesh, the north-easternmost state of the Indian union, is the home of numerous tribes with colourful tradition and culture differing from each other in dialects, customs and practices. But some underlying unity in their outlook and behaviour is palpable through the details of these characteristics. On the basis of religio-cultural overtones the major broad-groups of the tribes may be indicated as follows —

(1) Vajrayānī Buddhist tribes of the west and the north, (2) Animistic or Shamanist groups of the central region, (3) Hīnayānī or Theravādī Buddhist tribes of the east and (4) the groups of tribes formerly having head-hunting tradition, among them, again, the Noctes have embraced Vaisnavism. Most of these tribes do not have any literary records of their own relating to their past. Hence, it is difficult to determine specifically the various stages of periodical evolution in their socio-cultural pattern through the ages. As a result, their concept of crime and mode of justice in early times can be but vaguely known on the basis of some assertion in tribal tradition regarding continuity of their customary laws since time immemorial. The strength of these laws in tribal life even after modernisation set in, is also, in a way, suggestive of their long prevalence. Variability of the tribal societies of this state notwithstanding, their customary laws, and basic concepts of justice and crime and objectives or methods of punishment often reveal interesting points of similarity with the traditions and practices recorded in the law-books of ancient India.

Among the Monpas and the Khamtis, two Buddhist tribes with literary tradition, regular legal practices incorporate all the paraphernalia as laid down by the ancient Indian law-givers. It could have been due to their Buddhist heritage through which early Indian practices entered into their life. But the other tribes manage their affairs through village councils which are mostly informal except for the Adi bangos.<sup>1</sup> These councils consist of the village leaders and the priests. The village headmen participate as the representatives of the government. They settle all matters relating to crime and punishment in the locality in case of all the tribes including the Monpas and the Khamtis, too and at present function in accordance

with the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation of 1945. Owing to the influence of the modern governments age-old practices of severe punishments have now been discarded. Otherwise, the customary laws are still followed as the guiding principles for the proceedings in these councils which may be compared with the local courts of ancient India composed of assemblies of villages or townsmen such as *pūgas*.<sup>2</sup>

The deliberation of the councils are, in general, guided by the elders of the village and persons well-versed in customary tribal laws who assist the chief in arriving at any decision. Every member of the community is normally allowed to participate in the discussion with some reservation. Decision of the majority is not imposed but unanimity is attempted through discussion.

Their idea of justice may be gleaned through the opening address delivered by the Adi leaders before the *kebang* or council, which recalls the ideals regarding sources of law, its objective and its basic principles as visualised in the works of the law-givers of ancient India.<sup>3</sup> They consider the old customs to be of supreme importance which may, however, be improved upon through reason, proper exposition and explanation and thus made up-to-date. Equality before law and quick justice are also quite important principles cherished by them. Impartiality, mercy and compassion for poverty are equally vital elements of their justice and fines should be proportionate with crime. The long discussion in the councils aimed at bringing unanimity, sacrifices offered for restoration of harmony between the disputants and peace in society, importance of customs, sacrifices offered to the divinities in order to pacify them—all these are reminiscent of the views expressed in the Hindu law-books concerning the sources of law which attached due importance to custom, popular opinion and divine will.<sup>4</sup>

The tribal people, too, take proper cognisance of different kinds of offences like murder, rape, adultery, clan-incest, abduction, assault, abuse, defamation, theft, sorcery, setting fire, violation of taboos etc. The finer distinction made even in each of these cases to determine the gravity of offence is interesting to note. False claim or accusation is again a punishable offence.

For detection of crimes they apply various methods. Examination of witnesses, proofs and long deliberation are the common practices. Divination, oaths and ordeals may be employed when other methods fail to establish liability.

As regards the punishments death sentence, fine, confinement, mutilation or excommunication are awarded depending upon the nature of crime. Formerly capital punishment with or without torture was inflicted in accordance with the mode of crime. Deliberate murder, adultery and theft were punishable by death. But any kind of offence committed in self-defence or retaliation is not looked upon as a crime. Again, all types of punishment can be substituted by adequate fine or compensation.<sup>5</sup> Confinement is resorted to in cases of adultery, theft by a minor or servant or failure to pay compensation. In earlier times inability to pay compensation might even lead to enslavement of the culprit unless his friends relieved him by payment of ransom. Excommunication or deportation are decided upon in cases of sorcery, adultery with persons belonging to other communities etc. Whipping and chastisement are generally meant for women or young persons as well as for light offence.

It is quite fascinating that just like the ancient Hindus the tribal people properly assess the status of the convict or seriousness of the guilt before passing the judgement and the sentences vary accordingly. In award of fines economic position of the culprit is taken into consideration. The first offence in respect of theft is punished by compensation, while kleptomania is punishable by death.

The objectives of the justice in this tribal society are compensation or restoration, correction and prevention of crime through deterrent punishment and humiliation. The accused is not however, permanently segregated. On the contrary, his rehabilitation in society after proper repentance and purification is really aimed at. This is obvious from the sacrifices offered to divinities, which include those for restoration of friendship between disputants and communities in conflict. By these acts the soul of the stolen property is also exhorted to *return* to the article and the ghost of a person who is murdered is prevented from doing any harm.

Many of these practices recall ancient Indian traditions of law and justice. It is quite likely that these traditions directly or indirectly reached these remote areas of the country in course of time with the advent of Brahmanical and Buddhist cultures. Possibility of a circuitous entry through Tibet and Burma cannot also be precluded in view of the link of the tribal people of the state with those countries.



Certain peculiarities of the tribal laws like group responsibility for a crime committed by an individual or acceptability of fine as a substitute for any punishment, on the other hand, remind us of certain customs prevailing in South-East Asian countries like Java.<sup>6</sup>

These latter characteristics when viewed against other aspects of culture of the region raises another interesting point to be considered in this context. Some of the ideas and practices of the tribes bearing faint resemblance with classical Indian tradition could also be really relics of the culture of the non-Aryan autochthons of the country which were incorporated in ancient Indian tradition and given due recognition in the law-books.

Footnotes :

1. V. Elwin, *Democracy in NEFA*, Shillong, 1965, p. 18.
2. *The Age of Imperial Unity*, (ed. R.C. Majumdar), Bombay, 1968, p. 344.
3. S. Roy, *Aspects of Padam-Minyong Culture*, Shillong, 1960, p. 223f.
4. *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 335f.
5. V. Elwin op. cit. p. 30; cf. *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century*, (ed. V. Elwin), Bombay, 1959. p. 327.
6. R.C. Majumdar, *Suvarṇadvīpa*, Vol. II, 1986 reprint, pp. 8-10.

## ARTICLES OF TRADE IN EARLY BENGAL

Nilanjana Mukhopadhyay

The territory which we may call 'Bengal' has a history which can be traced back to the pre-historic period. But the areas included within the region of Bengal find no mention in Vedic hymns. In fact, the earliest reference to a part of the territory, viz., Vaṅga is found in the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* as *vayāṁsi vaṅgāvagadhāśceraṇpādāh*.<sup>1</sup> But the exact significance of the relevant passage is not known.

On the basis of several Chinese and classic accounts as well as historical geography and early cartography of deltaic Bengal B. N. Mukherjee suggests that in the first four or five centuries of the Christian era, Vaṅga should have included the area now in the districts of 24 Parganas (north and south). Hooghly, Howrah, Midnapore and parts of Burdwan and probably also Birbhum. Bankura and Nadia.<sup>2</sup> So the area which came into limelight in the first four or five centuries A.D. is located within present West Bengal. These areas have yielded major early historical archaeological sites. More significantly, a handsome number of documents inscribed in Kharoṣṭī and Kharoṣṭī-Brāhmī (mixed script) have been found from what was ancient Vaṅga or the Ganges country.<sup>3</sup>

The irrefutable proof of a flourishing agrarian economy in the Bengal coast is furnished by a number of Kharoṣṭī and Kharoṣṭī-Brāhmī inscriptions.<sup>4</sup> It is evident from the documents that grains, especially paddy were grown in large amount in the coastal areas of Bengal. The excessive production paved the way for the transportation of a part of the produce by overseas voyages. A terracotta seal from Chandraketurgh bears a Kharoṣṭī and Kharoṣṭī-Brāhmī legend (of 3rd century A.D.) reading *Jidhatradhana Jusatrasi tridesojātrā*. This means, according to B.N. Mukherjee, "the journey to (or in) three directions of (i.e., by) Yaśoda who has earned food wealth (i.e., whose wealth is earned by selling food) [*Jitātradhana-Yasodasya tridesāyātrā*]."<sup>5</sup> Yaśoda, therefore, must have amassed wealth by transporting on ship grains (i.e., food) to three directions, i.e., to distant destinations. This will be further supplemented by the representation of a stylized stalk of grain in the right hand field of the seal. Almost similar scene is depicted on another seal discovered from Chandraketurgh (preserved in the Indian Museum, Kolkata) which shows the figure of a ship and at the centre is depicted a large basket from which the

stalks of grain come out. This emphasises on the fact that the ship carried grains.<sup>6</sup> Probably high sea-ships were used for transportation of grains.

Among other articles of trade, mention may be made of textiles. *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* speaks of the availability of "cotton garments of the very fine quality, the so-called Gangetic", which was exported from the port of Gange. Through the same port were also "shipped out malabathrum, Gangetic spikenard, pearls".<sup>7</sup> Ptolemy described the exportation of malabathrum, nard, muslin, silk and pearls from the Ganges.<sup>8</sup>

The information in the classical sources regarding the availability of malabathrum at the port of Ganges on the Ganges leads one to infer that the product was brought to Ganges from elsewhere and was not a product locally available. B. N. Mukherjee hints at the possible source of malabathrum (*tamālapatra/tejpata*) in "inter alia Khasi and Jaintia hills".<sup>9</sup> Seen from this light the hinterland of Gange spread as far as north-east as the mountains of Assam. The north-eastern borderland must also have furnished from Thina (china) "silk floss, yarn and cloth" that brought to the river Gange (i.e., obviously to a port on the Ganges and then shipped to Limyrike or South India).<sup>10</sup>

The discovery of Kharoṣṭī/Kharoṣṭī-Brāhmī biscriptual documents from lower parts of present Bengal has thrown new lights on the transaction of horses as a commercial item of trade.

A terracotta seal impression<sup>11</sup> originally found from Chandraketugarh (north 24 Parganas) "displays within circular border a masted ship, a *svastikā* symbol and a marginal legend". The seal may be palaeographically assignable to the 3rd century A.D.<sup>12</sup> It shows a figure of a horse on the right hand field and the right edge of the ship. The horse is shown in profile with its head towards the mast; its mouth, an eye and an ear also are clearly visible. The horse has somewhat an elongated neck, its torso also appears on the seal impression. Below the figure of the horse can be seen the figure of a man who wears a tall and flat-top cap and his right hand touches the body of the horse. Such a cap is purely non-indigenous. There is a distinct possibility of this being a Scythian cap and its user a north-westerner of non-Indian origin. Probably he is a horse dealer.<sup>13</sup> This seal is a genuine proof of transaction in horses in early Bengal, because a seal of this type has to be associated with the process of authentication of a transaction.

But horse was not an indigenous product. It had to be regularly imported into India from the north-western borderland of the subcontinent.<sup>14</sup> A glance at the map of north India would show that for the greater part of the Gaṅgā valley—especially the middle Gaṅgā valley—the Bengal delta provided the only outlet to the sea. The Jataka stories of late 2nd/1st century B.C. or 1st century A.D. describe the voyages by merchants from Vārāṇasī or Champā (Bhagalpur) to Suvarṇabhūmi or Suvarṇadvīpa.<sup>15</sup> Such merchants seem to have first undertaken a riverine journey along the Ganga to the Bengal coast., where from a sea-voyage was next made to south-east Asia. The recent discovery of Kharoṣṭī documents had thrown new lights on the extensive hinterland of coastal Vanga. Kharoṣṭī was largely known to have been in use in the north-western areas of the subcontinent. But the late Kharoṣṭī Inscriptions are found near Chunar in the heart of the Gaṅgā valley.<sup>16</sup> This would clearly suggest overland linkages of north-western India with the Bengal littorals. The availability of the horses in Bengal can, therefore, be explained as an import from the north-west to the deltaic Bengal through the Gaṅgā valley.

But we do not know where was the horse sent by this maritime trade. The Chinese account of Kang-tai (249-50 A.D.) informs us that “the Yueh-chih merchants are continually importing them (horses) to the ko-ying country by sea”.<sup>17</sup> On the basis of the statement B.N. Mukherjee suggests while the Yüeh-chih traders were either Kuṣāṇa merchants or dealers in the vast Kuṣāṇa country,<sup>18</sup> Ko-ying is located in Malay Peninsula. Kang-tai thus clearly mentions about overseas voyages to south-east Asia to transport horses from Indian mainland. Attention has also been drawn to a copper drum (found in the island of Sangeang in S.E. Asia) depicting two men in typical Yüeh-chih dresses along with a horse. The availability of Kharoṣṭī and Kharoṣṭī-Brāhmī documents in Bengal and also in Oc-eo (Vietnam) and U-thong (central Thailand)<sup>19</sup> would strongly emphasise upon contact between the Bengal littorals and south-east Asia. Such contacts must have been maritime in nature and can logically be associated with the transportation of horses to south-east Asia.<sup>20</sup>

The products involved in the maritime voyages of Bengal were therefore grains, textile products, spices of diverse types and horses. Of these the ‘Gangetic’ muslin, spices and horses must have been extremely precious commodities. The transaction in grain speaks of trade in an essential commodity by sea-borne voyages.<sup>21</sup>

Notes and References :

1. *Āitareya Brāhmaṇa*, II. I.I..
2. B.N. Mukherjee, *Indian Museum Bulletin* (henceforth *IMB*), 1990, 66.
3. B.N. Mukherjee, *ibid.*, Appendix I, A list of Select Inscriptions. Also pp. 65-68.
4. B.N. Mukherjee, *ibid.*, pp. 2,5,9,36,39,60.
5. *IMB*, 1990, ML, 6.
6. In the collection of the Indian Museum, Kolkata (IM 90/181); Also see B.N. Mukherjee and Ranabir Chakravarti (ed.) 'Indigenous Traditions of Navigation in the Indian Ocean (Bengal coast)' — A CSIR (EMR/II) Research Project Report (92-93) — Section II, 'Seafaring in the Bengal Coast' (upto 7th century), Ranabir Chakravarti, p. 38.
7. *Periplus*, Sec. 63.
8. *Ptolemy*, VII, I, 16-17.
9. B.N. Mukherjee, *External Trade of Early North-Eastern India*, 34.
10. *Periplus*, Sec. 64.
11. Now in the collection of the State Archaeological Museum, Kolkata — No. D.A.W.B. CKG. 180).
12. *IMB*, 1990, ML 11.
13. Ranabir Chakravarti, 'Maritime trade in Horses in Early Historical Bengal' — A seal from Chandraketurah, *Pratna samikshā*, I, 1992, 155-60.
14. B.N. Mukherjee, *IMB*, 1990.
15. A.N. Bose, *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India*, II. Kolkata, 1967.
16. B.N. Mukherjee, 'Kharoṣṭī Inscriptions from Chunar (U.P.)', *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, XXXII, 1-4, 1990, 103-108.
17. Shu-ching-chu, Ch. I, L. Petech, *Northern India According to the Shu-ching-chu*, Rome, 1950, 53.
18. B. N. Mukherjee, *The Economic Factors In the Kuṣāṇa History*, Kolkata, 1970, p. 37-38.
19. The document is now in the Lopburi Museum, Thailand.
20. B.N. Mukherjee, *IMB*, 1990 : Plate XLI, Figs. 59,61,62 B.N. Mukherjee, 'Decipherment of the Kharoṣṭī Brāhmī Script', *Monthly Bulletin of the Asiatic Society*, August, 1989; H.P. Ray, *Trade and Diplomacy in India-China relations : A Study of Bengal in the Fifteenth century*, New Delhi 1993, 118-20. This may suggest a continuity of a much earlier tradition of the shipment of horses from the Bengal coast to S.E. Asia and China., Also see B.N. Mukherjee and Ranabir Chakravarti (Ed) "Indigenous Traditions of navigation in the Indian Ocean (Bengal Coast)" — A CSIR (EMR/II) Research Project Report, 92-93 Section II, R. Chakravarti, op. cit. p. 31.
21. B.N. Mukherjee and R. Chakravarti (ed), *ibid.*, p. 31-32.

## BOOK REVIEW

### THE PERIPLUS OF THE ERYTHRAEAN SEA (in Bengali)

Translated by Subid Chattopadhyay

Sarat Book Distributors, Kolkata, 2000, pp. 41, Rs. 80.

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea written by an unknown Greco-Egyptian sailor in the second half of the first century A.D. is a valuable and trustworthy account of the early trade and maritime activities between India and the Western countries. It was written in a period when a direct sea route between Egypt and the Indian coast was opened up. It made possible direct trading between Egypt and India without having to use the Arabian ports as transit points.

'The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea' by Subid Chattopadhyay is a Bengali translation of the above text. In the words of the author, "difficulty faced by the students studying in Bengali and the need to study foreign literature through mother language" have inspired him to take up the work of translating the text.

The book begins with an introduction where the author largely deals with the problem of the probable period of the composition of the text. According to him it should be dated between A.D. 50 to A.D. 89. His conclusion is chiefly based on the reign period of Zoscales, the king of Auxumites between A.D. 50 to A.D. 89. mentioned in sections 4 and 5 of the Periplus. He further suggested that within this proposed date bracket the author of the Periplus might have travelled more than once and his work reflects the political condition of different times within this period. It may not be out of place here to point out that the proposed dates for the composition of the text suggested by different scholars range from the first century A.D. to the first half of the third century A.D. A date bracket of A.D. 225 to A.D. 230 was proposed by Jacqueline Pirenne in 1961 on the basis of the evidences relating to South Arabia in the Periplus. This view has been refuted by Christian Robin who after judging the evidences used by Pirenne said that "evidences concerning South Arabia overrules the third century A.D. as the possible date of the Periplus" and also 'the second century'. On the contrary it does not run counter to a date in the first century A.D. G. Fussman suggested that the political situation of north India as described in the Periplus reflects the condition between A.D. 30 and A.D. 50. He regarded A.D. 50 as the 'terminus ante quem' for the composition of the text. Prof. Chattopadhyay has, however, taken into consideration both the information relating

to South Arabia and the Indian sub-continent in this matter and reached his conclusion which seems to be a reasonable one. However, his statement that "the author of the *Periplus* travelled more than once and his work reflects the political condition of different times between A.D. 50 and A.D. 89" needs further corroboration from other evidences.

The author referred to the discovery of the monsoon wind by Hippalus in the introduction. It may, however, be pointed out that the historicity of the account about Hippalus in the *Periplus* has been doubted by some scholars. Santo Mazzarino pointed out that this tradition originated among Egyptian sailors and must certainly be rejected. Posidonius who wrote in the second decade of the first century B.C. regarded Eudoxus of Cyzicus as the person who, following the directions of an unnamed Indian, had traced and pointed out the 'monsoonal' route to India. Thus the theory of the discovery of monsoon wind by Pilot Hippalus is actually a myth. In fact Pliny referred to *hypalum* as the monsoon wind which blew on the route from Syagrus to Patale and called it "(under) sea wind". Its original pronunciation sounded like *hupalos* or *hūpalos*. However, the author of the *Periplus* never regarded the wind as the 'discovery' of Hippalus. He only said that Hippalus was the first to open the crossing of the open sea after observing 'the location of the ports and the shape of the sea' and that the south-west wind "is called Hippalus, from the name of him who first discovered the passage across" (*Periplus*, section 57).

The next section contains the Bengali translation made on the basis of the English translation of the original text in Greek, by W.H. Schoff and J.W. McCrindle. In the introduction the author confessed his limitation regarding his non-acquaintance with the Greek language. In this section he has tried to make a thorough translation which is obviously a job of great difficulty. But the author has done it successfully by providing appreciable Bengali renderings of difficult expressions like 'cave-dwelling fish-eaters', 'calf-eaters' (p. 1), 'Ptolemais of the Hunts' (p. 2) etc. The Bengali renderings of 'cave-dwelling fish-eaters' and 'calf-eaters', however, do not appear consistent side by side. Nevertheless, the use of colloquial Bengal words like 'Pāhāḍiā dvīp' (Eng. Mountain Island), 'Badmās' (Eng. quarrelsome) etc. has added life to the translation. Apparently the author has fully made use of his experience of teaching the text for several years.

In course of his translation the author often mentioned the identification of some of the places within brackets and also

explained the reason of error by the author of the Periplus in some cases (e.g., p. 19). Keeping in mind the fact that the identification of the kings and places mentioned in the Periplus and explanations of different expressions have already been discussed by Schoff in his book, it still appears that some detailed footnotes would have made the book more rich. Particularly the terms like 'lobān' (Eng. Frankincense), 'Śilāpuṣpa' (Eng. Storax), 'Kuṭh' (costus) need explanations as such words are not very familiar even to the Bengalis.

The book is equipped with a detailed index.

On the whole, the Bengali translation of the Periplus, the first of its kind, by Subid Chattopadhyay is highly creditable. While remaining faithful to the original text, the author has used simple and fluent language. The lucid style of the translation is worthy of praise. This book would undoubtedly become essential to the students studying in Bengali.

Sayantani Pal\*

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## II

### ARCHITECTURAL MOTIFS IN EARLY MEDIAEVAL ART OF EASTERN INDIA by Sudipa Bandyopadhyay

Published by R.N. Bhattacharya, Kolkata, 2002, XIII, 162 pages, 11 pages of drawing, 1 map and 87 figures, price Rs. 3800.00

The book, as the title suggests, is a work which endeavours to supplement our knowledge about the architecture of eastern India through an indepth study of the motifs used in the representational art of the region concerned. It has five chapters, three being divided into appropriate sections and sub-sections. The first chapter opens with a general introduction that seeks to explain the meaning of the term "architectural motif," adduce arguments for dwelling on the subject, present an overview of architectural motifs in India through the ages, catalogue Pāla-Sena sites which have yielded objects bearing such motifs and trace in a general way the evolution of Pāla-Sena art. The second chapter briefly surveys the political and geographical history of eastern India. The third chapter, which occupies the largest space, is devoted to the main theme of the book ---- the architectural motifs as evolved during the Pāla-Sena period. Here the materials, on which these motifs are found, have been described, classification of the motifs according to their temporal and religious character has been made and the objects they represent have been categorised. In the fourth chapter, the structural parallels of the Pāla-Sena motifs, found elsewhere in India, have been identified. It also includes a comparative study of the Pāla -Sena art and the contemporay art of east, south and south-east Asia to explore the possibility of their mutual influence. In this connection, two architectural forms, viz. *stūpa* and *deul* in motif and in their extant representations, have been given special emphasis. What transpires from this study is that the architectural forms that emerged during the Pāla-Sena period had their influence felt in such countries like China, Myanmar and Indonesia. The concluding chapter contains a summary of the findings that have emerged from the entire exercise.

The foregoing may give an idea about the aim and purpose of the present treatise developed through an analytical and painstaking research. It not only throws welcome light on the nature, content, development and links of a subject not receiving due attention from the scholars but also demonstrates the potentiality of this aspect of Bengal art by bringing to our knowledge a number of architectural types and elements which are

found only in motifs. One of the types represented in the motifs alone is what the writer describes as the *caityagarbhadeul*. From its depiction in sculpture and painting, the shrine looks in its frontal appearance like 'a barrel-vaulted niche.... surmounted by a **caitya**.' The illustrated manuscripts, where the shrine finds its depiction, refers to the structure as a *caitya* and the deity it nestles in a niche-like element is mentioned as *caityagarbhashtitā* or *caityaguḥā garbhashtitā*. The learned writer follows S.K. Saraswati in interpreting the word *caityagarbha* or *caityaguḥāgarbha* in the sense of a *deul*. One may, however, desire to know why the structure, if it is a temple, is referred to as a *caitya*, whose connotation is different from a *deul*. In building this section on architectural forms known from motifs the writer has followed in the main the tradition set by S.K. Saraswati but in doing so she has exhibited remarkable thoroughness and praiseworthy clarity in the treatment of her subject. However, the linkage drawn between the *stūpa-śīrṣa* and *śikharaśīrṣa bhadra deuls* of eastern India, so far as they are known from the motifs, and some temples of Pagan (Myanmar) and Java (Indonesia) needs to be reconsidered since the cited examples in the countries outside India seem to stem from conceptions not identical with that of their alleged Indian sources. Though in this and a few other areas, one may want to dispel his doubt, the merit of the book as a sound piece of research admits of no doubt. For any student of Indian art history, the book is worth reading.

D. R. Das

### III

ESSAYS ON FOLKLORISTICS by Barun Kumar Chakraborty, Published by Tapan Kumar Mukherjee, Kolkata 2002, 145 pages, price Rs. 200.00

The book *Essays on Folkloristics* by Professor Barun Kumar Chakraborty provides fascinating glimpses into various aspects of folklore. The book is basically a collection of papers presented at various international, national and state level seminars by the author.

After pointing out the differences between folk rituals, beliefs and customs through many concrete examples in the opening chapter, the author goes on to make a comparative study of folk religion and tribal religion. He gives a brief outline of religious sects like 'Balahari', 'Kartabhaja' 'Sahebhdhani' and 'Lalansahi' as well as a list of all the major deities found in folk and tribal religions. He then points out the differences between the two types of religion. The author also devotes a separate chapter to the discussion of various regional religious cults of Bengal. He focuses mainly on cults like 'Rahin-puja', 'Khaidhera' and 'Ind-puja' in the districts of Midnapore and Purulia. The author makes a brilliant comparative study of the two harvest festivals called 'Bhadu' and 'Tusu' in another essay. He tries to reconstruct a history of their origin by analysing the narratives of the songs sung during the festivals.

The two chapters on folk songs and folk proverbs of Bengal provide useful insight into the customs and rituals of everyday life. Songs and proverbs related to themes like marriage, journey and punishment are particularly interesting. One of the most interesting essays in the collection is 'Folkloristic Elements in Bengali Literature' where the author analyses the impact of folk literature on mainstream canonical literature.

The author has included as many as four essays on various folk superstitions. The essays are all based on actual field studies. He has tried to point out the scientific basis of some of these folk superstitions. He gives an exhaustive list of most of the superstitions related to activities like journey, agriculture, marriage, etc. An entire essay is devoted to a discussion of the role of iron in the formation of folk superstitions. Superstitions are an integral part of folk culture. The essays on superstitions therefore are a valuable addition to the book.

Folk medicine was not a widely discussed topic until recently.

The common notion about folk medicines is that they are nothing but charms infused into water by incantaion. It has no medicinal value whatsoever. The essay on folk medicines offers valuable information on this largely unknown subject. The essay titled 'Folk Mathematics' also offers interesting information on various simple methods of calculation.

The essay on Kalighat paintings is another important chapter in the book. Basically a form of folk art, Kalighat paintings gained wide popularity in nineteenth century Bengal. After discussing the origin and development of this particular art form, the author goes on to give a detailed account of the structural and characteristic features of Kalighat paintings.

The book will be of great interest to students and laymen alike.

Sudipa Bandyopadhyay

## **SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS (2000-2002)**

- **The Character of The Maurya Empire by B. N. Mukherjee**  
Calcutta, J.B. Enterprises, 2000. This book is a significant addition of the growing genre of literature of the Mauryas. Penned by one of the foremost empiricist historians of our times, the approach to Maurya history is naturally entirely source based. The author has successfully dished out to us an objective analysis of the sources of the Maurya period, including an assessment of the data gleaned from seven Greek and Aramaic edicts of Asoka, which he calls 'sober' history.
- **Thoughts on Synthesis of Science and Religion (Proceedings of the Second World Congress for The Synthesis of Science and Religion) edited by Samarendra Bandyopadhyay**  
Calcutta, B.I. Publishers, 2000. This book incorporates invaluable articles from many very distinguished scholars from all over the world including five nobel laureates like Prof. Charles Townes from U.S.A. (Physics), Prof. Richard R. Ernst from Switzerland (Chemistry), Mrs. Betty Williams from Ireland (Peace) and with a foreword by another nobel laureate The Dalai Lama. The volume was released in January 2002 at a special session of the Indian Science Congress held in Lucknow.
- **Nationhood and Statehood in India by B.N. Mukherjee**  
Shillong, Indian Council of Social Science Research — North-Eastern Regional Centre, 2001. An indepth study on the question of Nationhood and Statehood in India has been made by the author. He argues in favour of using the term 'government' instead of 'state' as in his opinion, the concept of state had its beginning only in the 16th century.
- **Buddhist Divinities by Puspa Niyogi**  
New Delhi, Mushiram Manoharlal, 2001. A welcome addition to Buddhist Studies, this book contributes to the history of Buddhism not only in the field of religion but also in the field of art as well. Highly rich in documentation, it presents a systematic account of many renowned scholars of Buddhist religion, philosophy and literature. The book also highlights the peculiarities of Buddhism which were developing in some of its later phases.

- **Trade in Early India, ed. by Ranabir Chakravarti**  
New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2001. This book is enriched by a collection of fifteen essays plus a long and healthy introduction by the editor. The essays cover the period from the third millennium BC to c. AD 1300 and their main focus is not only on trade and economic activities but allied social and political developments. The introduction provides an insight to the historiography of early Indian trade and seeks to examine the existence of different levels of exchange-related activities, trade being only one among these. A detailed annotated bibliography is another strong point of this work.
- **Trade and Traders In Early Indian Society by Ranabir Chakravarti**  
New Delhi, Manohar, 2002. In this book, trade, traders and trade centres are not perceived as undifferentiated categories but are treated in the light of the changes and continuity in early Indian history. The conflicting attitudes of early Indian societies to merchants are explored by the author. The perception of declining trade has been aptly challenged and the author demonstrates the linkages of trade at the locality level during the period AD. 600-1000. An elaborate study of ports on the Bengal coast is presented which highlights the position of early Bengal as an active zone of maritime trade.
- **Early India (From the Origins to AD 1300) by Romila Thapar**  
London, Penguin, 2002. This is revised edition of the much acclaimed early India volume in the original Penguin History of India. The author attempts 'to incorporate the essentials of the new data and interpretations while retaining some of the older arguments where they are still relevant'. Political history has been treated as skeletal framework in order to provide a chronological bearing. The thrust is on interrelating political, economic, social and religious aspects of a period and thereby point out the changes that have occurred and how these in turn have had an effect on each aspect. An extremely rich bibliography and a number of maps are worth mentioning.

- **The Archaeology Of Eastern India : New Perspectives, edited by Gautam Sengupta and Sheena Panja**

Kolkata, Centre for Archaeological Studies and Training, Eastern India, 2002. This book addresses certain archaeological questions and problems of the region which have recently caught the attention of archaeologists. The introduction by the editors introduces the readers to the history of archaeology in the colonial and post independence era and focuses on the new perspectives in Eastern India and Bangladesh. Some of the broad themes include the question of chronology and style, the notion of a 'site', the role of ethnographic work and its relevance to the archaeology of Eastern India, current works in archaeological science and review of archaeological explorations and excavations. It is indeed a much awaited publication giving a clarion call for holistic archaeology.

- **Architectural Motifs In Early Mediaeval Art of Eastern India by Sudipa Bandyopadhyay**

Kolkata, R.N. Bhattacharya, 2002. The focus of this book is on the architectural motifs in the early mediaeval art of Eastern India in general and the art of Bihar and undivided Bengal in particular, the time frame being eighth to thirteenth century AD. In spite of the paucity of extant edifices, the author has made an indepth and analytical study of the rich art repertory of the Pāla-Sena period and those of the neighbouring states as well as of the territories outside India, notably in South-East Asia. The study is an indicator of transmission and dissemination of the Pāla-Sena art styles to the neighbouring region. A descriptive glossary along with numerous illustrations are an added attraction.

Suchandra Ghosh

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROGRAMME IN WEST BENGAL**

### **JAGJIVANPUR**

Jagjivanpur is a small, obscure village in the Malda District of West Bengal. But now it occupies an important position in the archaeological map of the state. The chance discovery of a copper plate inscription of Mahendrapāladeva (c. 9th-10th Century A.D.) in 1987 has made the place famous. The plate introduces Mahendrapāla as a Pāla sovereign. His identity was unknown until recently. The discovery has important consequences for an understanding of the history of the Pāla period.

Extensive excavations were carried out in the area after this chance find. Among other things, the site has yielded remains of a brick-built Buddhist monastery, cells with corbelled niches and stūpas. The site has also yielded a rich crop of antiquities like terracotta plaques, terracotta seals and sealings, inscribed potsherd, decorated tiles, iron and terracotta bangles, beads of semiprecious stones, terracotta lamps, potteries and other items of daily use. There are several archaeological mounds in the area that are yet to be excavated.

### **CLIVE HOUSE**

The Archaeological Survey of India has recently unearthed an urban settlement of the Śuṅga-Kuṣāṇa period in the northern outskirts of Kolkata. Findings from the site indicate that the site was occupied in two phases from the 2nd Century BC with continuous occupation up to the 11th-12th Century AD. After a short gap, it was further occupied from the 15th-16th Century AD up to modern times.

In the first phase of the excavation the site yielded several terracotta plaques displaying figures of Yakshiṇīs, punch-marked and cast copper coins, beads fashioned out of semiprecious stones and inscribed seals and sealings. Terracotta figurines of the Gupta and post-Gupta period have also been discovered from the site. Of these, the most significant is a mother-and-child ensemble. The most remarkable find is a miniature stone icon of Mahishāsūramardini datable to the 9th-10th Century.



The second phase of the excavation yielded more interesting results. Human skeletons of the 2nd-1st Century BC were found at the lowest level. Other materials discovered from the site indicate the existence of an urban settlement in the area. The blackware and greyware pottery, some of them stamped, show clear affinities with pottery of the same period discovered from other sites.

## PAKHANNA

The ancient site of Pakhanna lies between 23°24'45" north Latitude and 87°22'40" east Longitude. The site is located on the right bank of Damodar river which forms a natural boundary between Burdwan and Bankura. The present village of Pakhanna is 21 K.M. south-east of Durgapur railway station and 35 K.M. north of Bishnupur and 25 K.M. north-east of Bankura town.

The department of Archaeology, University of Calcutta has been excavating the site since 1997 with a break in 2001. The major objectives of taking up excavation at this site are as follows :

- 1) Identification of ancient Pushkaran of Chandravarman of Susunia rock inscription.
- 2) To study the nature of transition from Chalcolithic to early historic period.
- 3) To reconstruct the chronology of the site.
- 4) To demarcate the settlement areas of different culture periods.

Keeping in view the limitation of financial resources and time, the lay out of trenches were given in horizontal plan by dividing the mound into a number of grids, each grid measuring 6m×6m. But the actual digging was done in vertical plan to get maximum information pertaining to the problems noted above.

We can summarize the findings of our excavation in the following ways :

- 1) The identification of present Pakhanna with ancient Pushkaran still remains wide open.
- 2) The first colonization of the area by man started during Black and Red ware culture (Chalcolithic).
- 3) The settlement area was initially confined to Bhairabdanga during Black and Red ware culture, but subsequently it was extended towards east from time to time.

- 4) The discovery of numerous terracotta Ringwells indicate the density of population of urban centre at Pakhanna. The ringwells were used both for fetching water and for soakpits.
- 5) The discovery of pit refuses attached to house complexes are unique features of Pakhanna Black and Red ware culture.
- 6) Iron smelting activities are found at the lower level of Black and Red ware culture of Bhairabdanga. This year reveals that iron technology was known to them right from the very beginning.
- 7) The discovery of NBPW and Rouletted ware sherds at Pakhanna suggests that Pakhanna was linked up with middle Ganga and lower Bengal through trade routes.
- 8) It also appears from excavation that the early historic phase of Pakhanna was the most prosperous and flourishing period in the history of the site.

(Information regarding Pakhanna as received from the Department of Archaeology, University of Calcutta on 26.03.2003).

Sudipa Bandyopadhyay

## ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT : DECEMBER 2000-NOVEMBER 2002

During the period concerned, the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University organised a number of lectures on a variety of topics and a National Seminar under its auspices.

1) At the monthly Seminar, held in this department on the 2nd of August 2001, Prof. Samarendra Bandyopadhyay of the same department presented an interesting illustrated lecture on "Muralīdhara Kṛṣṇa on Eastern Indian Coins". The Head of the Department Prof. Subid Chattopadhyay presided over the meeting.

According to Prof. Bandyopadhyay, early Indian texts like the *Mahābhārata*, *Harivarṇsa* and *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, which otherwise deal with the many exploits of Kṛṣṇa, do not mention him with the veṇu (flute). The earliest literary source representing him in this posture is the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. This aspect of him attracted the attention of artists who started depicting this theme and it is noticed in the sculptures dating from about c. 8th century A.D. and on a type of copper coin of the Chola king Rājaraja (A.D. 985-1016). So far as the representation of this theme in Eastern India is concerned, though it is found on stone sculptures from the 12th-13th centuries. A.D., no coin depicting the theme earlier than the time of some of the Tripura kings, has yet been traced. The coins bearing the device belong to Ratnamāṇikya I (1464 A.D.) Anantamāṇikya and Yaśomāṇikya. The coins of some of the Manipur kings like Mārajit Siṁha, Jaya Siṁha and Nara Siṁha, all belonging to the c. 19th century A.D. are found to represent the theme. On some of the so-called Rāmaṭaṅkās also, the flute playing Kṛṣṇa, under a kadamba tree, can be seen.

2) At the next monthly seminar held on the 28th of September 2001, Dr. Suchandra Ghosh, of the same department, delivered, before an appreciative audience a well documented lecture on "The Western Coast of India and Gulf : Maritime trade during the third to the seventh cent. A.D." She sought to examine the nautical relations existing between the Persian Gulf region and the Western coast of India in the period extending from the third to the seventh century A.D. The interest of the Sasanians, the premier political power in Iran, in gaining control over the major maritime artery, the

Persian Gulf and the trade network which began to grow with the spread of Islam were the major aspects of the period that were ably highlighted by the speaker in her paper.

3) Prof. Amitabha Bhattacharya, of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, University of Calcutta, presented his illuminating paper on the "Jagjivanpur copper Plate Inscription of the Pāla king Mahendrapāla, at the monthly seminar held on the 23rd of April, 2002. His paper was an able exposition of the emerging new facts, which would enable scholars to rearrange the hitherto accepted Pāla chronology.

4) Dr. Ashok K. Datta of the Department of Archaeology, University of Calcutta delivered an interesting lecture on the "Chalcolithic Culture of West Bengal" at the monthly seminar of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, University of Calcutta held on the 31st of July, 2002. In the opinion of Dr. Datta, distinct traces of Chalcolithic settlements are discernible in the major important river valleys of south western part of West Bengal by about 1500 B.C. Unfortunately, sustained effort to know more about the people and its culture have proved futile. In his paper, the author elucidated on the two important issues of this culture (1) Genesis or antecedent stage of chalcolithic culture and (2) its contribution towards the formative phase of urbanization in Bengal.

5) A new trend in academic studies was highlighted by Dr. Rita Chaudhuri of the Dept. of A.I.H.C. in her paper entitled "Some Aspects of Environmental Consciousness in an Early Medieval Text— Śukranīti" presented at the monthly seminar held in the Department on the 27th of August, 2002. She delved on the various aspects dealt with by Śukrāchāryya in his Śukranīti, which revealed an early realisation of the existent intimate relationship between man and his natural surroundings and their mutual interdependence. The author concluded that mankind as an integral part of the ecosystem, should seek to establish a balance between his requirements and the need for conserving Nature for the benefit of posterity.

### OCCASIONAL LECTURES

1) A special lecture was organised on the 25th of April Dr. A Veluswamy, Professor Dept. of Sculpture, Tamil University, gave an illustrated lecture on "Pallava and Chola Art" Dr. Subid

Chattopadhyay, Head of the Department of AIHC presided over the lecture. It was well attended by teachers, scholars and students.

2) Dr. Nicholas G. Rhodes, Secretary General, Oriental Numismatic Society, U.K. and Treasurer, Royal Numismatic Society, London, delivered a lecture on "Historical Perspectives of Tripura Coins" on the 3rd of October, 2002. The Head of the Department, Dr. Subid Chattopadhyay, presided over the meeting. It was well appreciated by a learned audience.

### **ENDOWMENT LECTURE**

The R.P. Nopany lecture for the year 2002 was held in the Department on the 10th of September 2002. Prof. Dilip Kumar Ganguly of the Dept. of A.I.H.C. and Archaeology Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, delivered a series of two lectures on "The Gurjara-Pratiharas of Jalor-Ujjayin : A dynastic history." Dr. Suresh Chandra Bhattacharya, Prof. of the Dept. of A.I.H.C., University of Calcutta, presided over the occasion. He introduced and welcomed the speaker. Dr. Samaresh Bandyopadhyay, offered thanks to the president and the audience. The lecture was well attended.

### **NATIONAL SEMINAR**

The Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, University of Calcutta successfully organised a three day National Seminar on the "Development of Science and Technology in Ancient India" on the 18th, 19th and 20th of March 2002. Presided over by Dr. Asiskumar Banerjee, the Vice-Chancellor University of Calcutta, the seminar was formally inaugurated by Dr. P.C. Chunder, former education minister of India and a student of the Department, by lighting a lamp and delivering a short address. The key-note address was delivered by Dr. S. K. Mukherjee, former Vice-Chancellor of the Universities of Kalyani and Calcutta. In his welcome address Dr. Samaresh Bandyopadhyay, Prof. of the Dept. , and the convener of the seminar, delved on the relevance and necessity of holding a seminar on the topic concerned. The Chief Guest, Mr. H.H. Robinson, Ambassador, Ricardo Palma University, Lima, Peru, South America addressed the inaugural session. The session ended with a Vote of thanks by Prof. Dr. Subid Chattopadhyay, Head of the Dept. of AIHC, University of Calcutta.

The three day seminar, had six separate academic sessions, presided over by Prof. Dr. Arun Kumar Biswas, Dr. Dilip Kumar Sinha, Dr. Ashoke Kumar Bagchi and Dr. D.P. Mukherjee. The distinguished scholars who attended the seminar and read their papers on various aspects of the subject concerned, included Dr. Nupur Dasgupta, Dr. Pranab Kumar Chatterjee, Dr. Asim Kumar Chatterjee, Dr. Atul Kumar Sinha, Dr. Abhaykumar Singh, Dr. Kripasindhu Chaudhuri, Dr. Amal Bhaumik, DR. Amal Kumar Mukherjee, Dr. D.P. Mukherjee, Dr. T.D. Singh, Dr. Sukla Das, Dr. Arabinda Samanta, Dr. Mridula Saha, Dr. Korak Kumar Chaudhuri, Dr. Kumudranjan Naskar, Dr. Mira Ray, Dr. Vijay Thakur, Dr. Sravani Sen, Dr. Satyasankar De, Dr. Balai Chaki, Dr. Pradip Kumar Majumder, Sri Nikhilesh Bhattacharya, Sri Bikash Ghoshal, Sri Somenath Chattopadhyay and Dr. Sailesh Dasgupta. The Vote of thanks at the various sessions were delivered by Prof. Dr. Amitabha Bhattacharyya, Prof. Dr. Sureshchandra Bhattacharyya, Prof. Dr. Sm. Juthika Maitra, Dr. Dipak Ranjan Das and Prof. Bijanbihari De.

Sudipa Bandyopadhyay & Rita Chaudhuri

## OBITUARY

Korak Kumar Chaudhuri

“When to the sessions of sweet silent thought,  
I summon up remembrance of things past”.....

Dr. Korak Kumar Chaudhuri, (K.C. as he was fondly called) passed away on 30th July, 2003, in Calcutta. India lost one of her promising scholars of Indology. He was not one of them who achieved those fundamental inventions of a new paradigm, nor an idle dreamer. He was a teacher with a vision, sans pretensions, a beacon to the present generation.

K.C. postgraduated from the University of Calcutta with a First class First in Ancient Indian History and Culture. K.C. from the very beginning of his academic career, learnt Sanskrit and allied subjects to peruse the early Indian classical texts. He did his doctorate on “Ideas of History in Ancient India”.

He studied Chinese so that he could put his finger into the Ancient Chinese texts. He was among the few scholars who could use original Chinese sources. This established his reputation as a notable historian of Sino-Indian relations. He authored, “South India’s contact with China” and “Chinese coins from South India”, from primary investigation of materials which he was lately collecting for post-doctoral research on the early phase of Sino-Indian relationship.

Historiography was his forte. Some of his published essays include ‘Itihāsa in Early India : Towards an Understanding in Concepts’, ‘Prāchīna Bhārate Itihāsa Chetanā : Kayekti Prāsangik Tathyasūtra,’ ‘Marc Bloch : Sārvik Itihās Charchār Sandhāne’, ‘Concept of Panchayati Raj in Ancient India,’ etc. Among his recent publications is ‘Concerning Dange’s Reflections on India’s Ancient History’. His work on R.D. Banerji — ‘Puralekhavid Rākhaldās’, clearly brings out his reflections on objectivity, claiming it to be the perfect arbiter of the ultimate truth. Moreover, he wrote ‘Vaidik Sāhitye Lokāyata Dhārā,’ and ‘Observations on Bengal-Orissa Political Relations : An Early Phase Of Co-operation’. His lectures on Historiography were relentlessly pursued by a series of logical arguments. He tried to keep up his tone of cold interrogation, and his voice when he spoke was humble and somewhat indifferent. While teaching at Vidyasagar University, he was associated with a number of forums of writers, historians and poets. During this time, he refused a prestigious American scholarship which his friend from Harvard, Richard Solomon, kept referring in his letters.

Incidentally, there was offer of a teaching assignment at

Cambridge earlier in his career. K.C. was nominated as International Man of the Year (2000-2001) by the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, UK. He was listed by the same centre in the prestigious publication of '2000 Outstanding Intellectuals of the 20th Century'.

From an early age, K.C. tried to emulate Vivekananda. To him 'every duty is holy and devotion to duty is most important.' Anguished by academic rivalry, he made certain decisions which kept him away from the golden limelight. Not a believer of jigs, he was unable to justify the misadventures of others.

His relentless hard work was the secret of all his wonderful teaching moments leaving his students mesmerised at the Universities of Calcutta, Midnapore, Burdwan and elsewhere. Everywhere, he admitted that the bottomline is simple, with a basic degree of humanism and integrity of character. He harped on good habits, and physical fitness.

He became the Head of the Department of A.I.H.C. and endeavoured teamwork for promotion of smooth running of academic administration. He shepherded all till he was sure that the results sought would be achieved. He often indulged in thought-provoking rebukes whenever he saw shortcomings among members of the faculty. Once I asked him, "What is thy excellence in a galliard, knight?" he promptly replied "Faith, I can cut a caper". He had a childlike fascination for stationery, and homilied on wastage.

To digress a little, he would occasionally remark on flower arrangement, ".....now they look better than before." A man with exceptional qualities, he was a skilled singer and a violinist, and I believe he never really cared for pizzicatos !! Some of the book sellers of College Street fondly recall Korak trying to learn binding and he meticulously succeeded.

During his last days (he was suffering for several months from a terminal illness.), it seemed that he was slipping straight down into an abyss and nobody could do anything to prevent it. His gaze was grave and lost in the distance, and his loyalty to life made him more fragile.

It was unfortunate that he died so early with so much of unfinished task ahead. Korak, a bud, a rare one, was denied by fate of blossoming. I wonder what host of angels would bear him safely through the next world?

"I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought, .....  
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend, all losses are restor'd  
and sorrow end".

Swati Ray



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